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N. Ramanathan

CONTENTS

Vol. XXIII	July 1997	No.3
Rallapalli Ananthakrishna Sarma . . .	By Prof. K. R. Rajagopalan	5
Purandra Dasa & Tyagaraja	By Mysore K. Vasudevachar	11
A Vision of Tyagaraja	By Y. Mahalinga Sastri B.A.B.L.	13
"Musical Saint Finds His Menaka" . . .	By 'Garland' N. Rajagopalan	17
'Melatraya' - Pandit Bhatkhande Memorial Lectures -	By Prof. R. Sathyanarayana	19
The Bhagavatha Tradition	By V.V. Sadagophan	25
"Ananda in Kainkarya"	29
Kalaimamani Kasturi	By Sulochana Rajendran	30
Poetry in Action	By Nandini Krishna	33
Talavadyotsav	By Bangalore K. Venkataram	35
Music Therapy.	39
"Silenced " Sanjuktha - A Tribute	By Sulochana Rajendran	41
Fillip to RTP - Cultural Scene in Mumbai -	By Kinnari	43
Musicological Research	By P. L. S.	48

Note : We regret the delay in the release of this issue which was occasioned, inter alia, by certain unavoidable technical troubles. Our apologies.

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SHANMUKHA

IN FOCUS

Rarely does one come across a musician who is a writer, critic, composer and better still a scholar-teacher. That is Sangeetha Kalanidhi Rallapalli Ananthakrishna Sarma whose editing of 8000 Annamacharya's Sankeerthanams and publishing them with notation in itself has been a monumental task and yeoman service to music. An eminent professor of mathematics cum connoisseur of music profiles this prolific writer-critic and lists a score and two songs he had composed.

The issue contains some rare write-ups culled out from our archives - quite studied, informative and educative. "To be in and yet out of the world", was the motto of Saint Purandara Dasa and Saint Tyagaraja who were "the Twin branches of the same tree", hailed Mysore Vasudevachar. His tribute written on the 100th Punyathithi of the Bard of Tiruvayyaru, is a priceless treasure. SHANMUKHA reproduces for the students of music.

"A Vision of Tyagaraja" makes a soul-awakening experience of the Bard's divine music, his Rama Bhakti.

Through the columns of SHANMUKHA the Garlander expresses his concern over the music of a "musical saint" who has found his "Menaka".

"Melatraya" - a conceptual trilogy of Swaramela, Vinamela and Ragamela which has remained a fundamental and formative principle in India Music - is an enlightening analysis presented by an eminent authority in music, as part of the Bhatkhande Memorial Lectures.

The shaping and sustenance of our country's musical culture down the centuries is lucidly traced by a scholar-musician in "Bhagavata Tradition", republished here.

"An eternal play of seeking and creating", a creative process at work and a poetry in action. - That was what the Kathak workshop Pt. Birju Maharaj conducted in this metropolis was. A young danseuse evaluates.

Music Therapy for bringing up premature babies and convalescing Cancer-Patients? Yes, according to information given by a news agency.

SHANMUKHA pays its humble homage to the 'soulful' Sanjukta who abruptly left the stage in the middle of her performing peak.

Once again, our apologies for the delay in the release of this issue.

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RALLAPALLI ANANTHAKRISHNA SARMA

BY PROF. K. R. RAJAGOPALAN

It is rare to find the musician who is a good writer and also a critic. Some musicians have been writers also e.g., Mysore Vasudevacharya but their writing are very closely linked with music and musicians only. To be critic and that too famous literary one is no mean achievement. Add to it being a Vaggeyakara. it definitely is noteworthy.

Such a person was Rallapalli Ananthakrishna Sarma. More. He was a teacher of merit (taught for forty long years at college level), a man of letters, a good singer, played on Violin and Flute. He wrote fairly at length on Telugu Literature. He had edited and tuned with distinction the compositions of Tallapakkam Annamayya of Tirumala copper plates fame into two volumes in the same Ragas as the composer indicated. He had about two dozen compositions to his credit in Telugu and Sanskrit.

Brief Life Sketch

He was born on January 23, 1893, at Rallapalli in the present day Andhra Pradesh. He had an elder and younger brother. He learnt Sanskrit and Telugu literature from his father Kamamandakala Krishnamacharyulu. He continued such education from Penugonda S. Tatacharyulu and Chamarajanagaram Rama Sastry. He shared a keenness even in his young age about literary criticism which caught the attention of Prof.C.R.Reddy of Mysore, who straightaway appointed him as a Telugu Pandit in Maharaja's College, Mysore, where he served from 1912 to 1948 and retired as lecturer in Telugu. Another illustrious tutor of his was no less a personage than the Head of the Parakala Mutt. - (Srivaishnava Mutt under the patronage of the Maharajas of Mysore) - His Holiness Sri Krishna Brahma Tantra Parakala Yatindra Swami. He learnt Prakrit by his own efforts.

His music initiation was under his own mother Alamelumangamma who used to sing Bhajans and Kritis as part of the Poojas at home. At the age of

13 he went to Mysore where he learnt music under Bidaram Krishnappa, a well known musician of the Mysore Court who also toured the country and gave concerts at a number of places in India (Ref.3) Sarma learnt to play Violin and Flute by his own efforts. He was intimate with the then Vidwans of Mysore -Kargiri Rao, Chikka Rama Rao, Muthiah Bhagavathar, Veena Seshanna, Veena Subbanna, Vasudevachar, Tiger Varadhachariar, etc.

He worked as Head of the Department of Music at Sri Venkateswara University of Tirupati from 1948 to 1962 when he finally retired and settled with his eldest son Phani Sayi at Bangalore.

Having been a fairly prolific writer, composer, singer, music and literary critic, it was but natural and appropriate that he presided over the annual conference of the Music Academy, Madras in January 1974 and received the title of Sangita Kalanidhi. He died in Bangalore on 11.3.1979 (Kaala Yukthi Phalguna Sukla Trayodosi Thithi).

Mention must be made of the fact that he taught his three daughters - Nagamani, Prabhavati and Harini - both vocal and veena. All the three became quite proficient but none of them took to performing on the platform, as it was contrary to the father's wishes. He also taught his eldest son Phani Sayi both Violin and Vocal. Phani Sayi who retired as Principal of a College in Bangalore continued to have interest in music right through. Of late, he has been giving a few performances around Bangalore. They all learnt the songs composed by Sarma from him.

Many others learnt from him but two of them T. S. Tatachar and A., V. Krishnamachar, made it to a high level of "A" Grade artistes (Violin) at AIR Bangalore and retired as staff artistes. Sarojamma was another who learnt Veena from Sarma and made a name for herself.

As already mentioned he was a great Telugu scholar well-versed in Sanskrit and Prakrit. He has written a book called *Natakopasnyasamulu*, a

series of lectures in Dramaturgy. A collection of 9 essays on literary criticism have been brought together as "Saraswatalokam".

A series of seven lectures delivered under the auspices of the Andhra University on the Telugu Poet Vemana were published later by the University itself and this book saw two more editions. He translated 700 "Galhas" from Prakrit and published them under *Salivahana Galhasaptasatis*. A number of friends and admirers who wrote books, were keen on his preface to their works and these are being compiled in a book titled *Rallapalli Peetikalu*. He translated Jayaprasada's *Vruttarathnavali* into Telugu. Besides he had written a large number of articles on various aspects of Telugu literature which have been published in various Telugu journals. Of these, "I have no count" says Phani Sai. He has given a number of talks over the AIR. He was considered one of the most distinguished prose writers in Telugu, even though his first work *Tara Devi* was in the traditional form of prose and verse. For all his prodigious output he was conferred the D.Litt., of Sri Venkateswara University of Tirupati.

On various aspects of music a set of articles under the title *Ganakala* was published in Kannada in 1954 and it saw other editions as well. It was prescribed as a text book for B.A. and B.Sc. in 1971. Some of these were written in Kannada by himself and some were translations (by himself) of Telugu articles. According to *Sruti* (116, May 1994); "Sarma rendered into Telugu 40 Padas of Purandaradasa and brought out *Panduranga Mahima* of Tenali Ramakrishnan".

He presided over several conferences on Telugu literature in various places in Andhra.

In 1940 *Andhra Patrika* published 22 songs of Tyagaraja with notation and copious notes by Rallapalli. He had dealt with inextenso the Ragas Manjari, Kannada Behag, Arabhi, Pantuvarali, Bharavi, Saranga, Vegavahini, Pratapavarali. He had also pointed out that there were no compositions in Kharaharapriya before Tyagaraja and even his contemporaries Dikshitar and Syama Sastri did not compose in this Raga. He has traced the peculiar evolution of Raga Pantuvarali which changed

its forms from pre-post - Tyagaraja periods. He also wondered if Ragas like Manjari and Kannada Behag were really creations of Tyagaraja (Ref. 1)

Tallapakkam Annamacharya's compositions were engraved on copper plates and kept in the inner rooms of the temple from where they were discovered five or six decades ago. "There are nearly 13 thousand songs and these have been published in 29 volumes by the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams. My father was the editor for about 8000 songs", says Phani Sai. Saint Annamacharya has indicated only the Raga of the song and rarely the Tala. Rallapalli identified himself with these songs, studied them in detail and published them with notation explaining some of the difficult passages therein. Even for this one monumental work, Rallapalli deserves all praise and he has made the musical world of later years beholden to him for these compositions. Many of them have been popularised by no less a personage than M. S. Subbulakshmi. In recognition of this service of his to the musical world, the TTD honoured him by the title of "Sangita Sahitya Vidwan" of the Tirumala Tirupathi Ashana of Lord Venkateswara. This was conferred on him at his residence at Bangalore by the Executive Officer of TTD who went over there for this very purpose because of Sarma's inability to travel.

Other titles that were awarded were "Ganakala Prapoorna" in 1927 when he presided over the Second Andhra Music conference, "Sangeetha Kalaratna" by the Bangalore Gayana Samaja; "Ganakala Sindhu" "Abhinava Thyagaraju, "Ganakala - Ratna" etc. His attitude towards all these was a studied detachment - "he never mentioned them or prefixed them to his name. His letter head simply read "R. Anantha Krishna Sarma" - says his son.

HIS OWN MUSICAL COMPOSITIONS

Even though there are only 22 of them they cover all the "branches" of music - from Geethas, Swarajathis, Varna, Kritis, Tillana and Mangalam. He did not sing them in public, nor did he teach them to his disciples - except his own sons and

daughters. They would sing them during their daily worship or on important festival days like Sri Rama Navami, Sri Krishna Jayanthi or Varalakshmi Vratam. His explanation was that some divine force impelled him to compose a few pieces and he simply acceded. When his second son pointed out that they would be lost to posterity if not published, his answer was "Lord Srinivasa at whose calling I wrote them will Himself take care of them".

His first steps at composing Geya Rachanas must have begun even while he was a teenager at Rallapalli along with his brothers. They would compete with one another in composing in Sanskrit and Sarma would set them to music since neither of the other brothers was musically inclined. His first composition, perhaps, was on Mahalakshmi with the words "*Jalarasibale lole*" (This does not find a place in the list appended at the end of this article.) After his stay in Mysore, with the patronage of the Parakala Matha Swamigal, he composed the Kirti - "*Ganarasamurthi Tyagaraja Patalu tenela tetalu*", in Kedaragoula, set to Adi Tala in Vilamba Kala. (The words mean that Tyagaraja's songs are sweeter than nectar).

The Kirti starts at the Tara Sthayi Shadja and traces the beauty of the words in the Bard's songs - that they would even transform non-believers into devotees of God. This kriti does not have any Mudra of his. In a few later Kritis he used the words Anantha - but perhaps thinking that this was egotism, changed it to Ananda or Paramananda. After all, the goal of all life is Ananda only - even Brahma is Anandamaya - (*Anandam Brahmeti Vyajaanathi* - says Thaittareya Upanishad.) These words would indicate his authorship without the odium of self praise.

All the 22 pieces are composed in different Ragas and he appears to have a penchant for Ragas ending with Kalyani - Kalyani, Purvikalyani, Hameerkalyani and Yamunakalyani. Most of the Ragas such as Sankarabharanam also find a place. The Tala used are Adi, Rupaka, Dhruva, Jhampa and Misra Chapu, One of the Kritis,

Chintaye Sri Rama (Mukhari, Misra Chapu), is modelled on the Pancharatna Kritis of Tyagaraja. It has seven Charanas with Swaras and Sahityas. Save 2 in Telugu, other 18 are in Sanskrit, the diction is quite scholarly and mellifluous. (When they are fully published by Phani Sai, readers and musicians would have chance appreciate them better.)

Only one Varna would be quoted below for the Sahitya. Being a staunch Vaishnavite all the songs are composed on Lord Vishnu, His Avatharas and manifestations and consort Lakshmi.

Rallapalli himself presented, during the Experts Committee Meetings of the Music Academy, some of his compositions which were sung by his daughter, himself accompanying on the Violin.

Familial Descendants

Rallapalli's wife was not musically inclined. They had 5 children - 3 girls and 2 boys. All the 3 girls learnt music from their father as also the elder son Phani Sai who went on to become professor of Psychology and Principal. But none of them was inclined to become performing artistes as that was against the wishes of the father. Sarma had christened his children rather with quaint names - Phani Sai, Jayanta, Nagamani, Prabhavati and Harini. This type of naming the children with out of the way names appears to have gone down to the next generation also! Here are some of them - Urmila, Dwarakadheesh, Yadu Kishore, Jyotirmayee, Bhargava Krishna, Surabhi, Mamata, Pradyumna, Vasudha, Nandanandan. All the children and some grandchildren are very much interested in Karnataka Music. Some have learnt from the grandfather too. Two of Phani Sai's sons are flutists and the younger one also gives concerts with his master S. A. Sasidhar, an A Grade artiste of AIR.

Phani Sai has been giving concerts, lecture demonstration on Rallapalli's compositions from 1993 when his birth centenary was celebrated. A workshop was conducted at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bangalore. At the Experts Session of the Gayana Samaja a lecdem, was given. Some songs were presented at the Telugu University, Hyderabad, the Rajarajeswari Gana Sabha,

Hyderabad, the College of Music and Dance at Tirupati and at the Ganakala Parishad, Anantapur.

According to Phani Sayi "Tyagaraja's Bhakti and experimental approach, Dikshitar's all expansive conceptions, Vilamba movement and mixing of the Vilamba and Madhyama speeds, Swati Tirunal's choice of simple, appropriate and sweet sounding words are found in Sarma's compositions. But he did not imitate anybody. His compositions were original creations. Father appealed to God to light the recess of the mind and remove the darkness, (*Maanasa Kuhuram Pradeepaya*), to stimulate the intellect (*Dheeyam Prachodaya*), to give him salvation (*Dhyaami Srinivasam Nishshreyasaaya*). His compositions contain the essence of the teachings of Sri Ramanujacharya's *Visishtadwaita* of total surrender to God.

Rallapalli's Concept of Kamatak Music

Sarma spoke at length his views on Kamatak Sangeeta at the Music Academy Session in 1974. A short summary could only be given in an article of this nature. (Excerpts from *Sruti*) :

Kamatak Music is a greatest of the arts contributed by India to the world. The people of the Punya Bhoomi and Karma Bhoomi of Bharatakhanda have taken part incessantly in the birth and development of this great art. As a consequence it has spread far and wide into Indian culture. All our deities have submitted to its influence. It has been given high position even in the land of Rakshasas and Vanaras as immortalised by the Kavikokila Valmiki in his *Ramayana*.

It had had a spiritual growth in this country. Our Atma functions at three levels of the mind, intellect and heart. We comprehend a thing by the mind, analyse its merits and defects by our intellect but experience it with our heart. In this sense, music is spiritual. It is this experience of the heart that is called Bhava and it is the real 'life'. Bhava comes first, Raga second and Tala third. i.e. the Raga Vistara should have priority over Tala Prasara and both these severally and jointly should contribute to Bhava.

Today, music is treated more as a bread winning occasion. My elderly preceptor vidwans did not learn music as a mere bread winning art. Doubtless some tried to please Maharajas and wealthy Patrons and had earned money and honour. But their service to music in a large measure was rendered through Bhajans either at home or at temple premises during festivals. It is because of this that people young and old had developed sincere devotion to music, pure and delicate tastes, and experiences in music. With the advent of independence monarchy has been liquidated and temples are no more interested in the preservation of tradition. In all fields, the individual has been losing his identity and strength and group is

gaining in power. While the individual has soul and a heart the group has none of these and is guided by excitement and impulse. This is a global phenomenon. As a result of this our music has left the home, the Goshti and the temple and has to seek the patronage of the public in the market place of the platform. The present day musician has to provide a fare which can attract and please all of them. It is quite an arduous task. Hence there is a craze.

There is a tyranny of Sastra and of Tradition also. While Sastra is essential in codifying the science, it should not become a Sastra for the life and development of an art. Similarly the so called tradition also. Why should Varna singing be confined only to the beginning of a Cutchery and the singing of Padams and Ashtapadis towards the end? There are some Varnas which could be rendered in two or three Kalas with independent Manodharma in the middle of a concert. Similarly, Kshetravya's Padams could be sung fully with all the Charanas bringing out their meaning and feeling. Why should we, in an attempt to make singing in Tara Sthayi easier, reduce the basic Sruti and render Nada weak and tasteless in the Mandra and Madhya Sthayis? Leading Music Vidwans should examine these problems and initiate necessary reforms.

Conclusion

Rallapalli led a simple and austere life. He was disciplined in observing the traditional Acharas of Sri Vaishnava. This writer (as a student) remembers seeing him walking along the corridors of the Maharaja's College, Mysore, with his Dhoti worn in the traditional style of Panchakacham, Sri Vaishnava Namam prominent on his forehead, with benign and smiling look on his face. He believed fully in the path of Saranagati of a total surrender to the Lord as preached by Ramanujacharya and as his son says attempted to put it into practice all his life.

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4. Rajagopalan K.R. "Mysore Vasudevachar" *Shanmukha* Vol. XIX No.1, January 1996.
5. *Sruti* 116, May 1994 Madras. Article by Sulochana Saralaya, Madabhushi Krishnaswamy and excerpts from the Presidential Address.

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF COMPOSITIONS

Sl. No.	Kriti / Composition	Raga	Tala	Kala	Language	Deity	Other details
1.	Abheerim Yaache	Purvi Kalyani	Misra Chapu	Vilamba	Sanskrit	Srinivasa	Kriti
2.	Amba Visvalambam	Bilahari	Adi	Vilamba	Sanskrit	Lakshmi	Kriti
3.	Chintaya Srinama	Mukhari	Misra chapu	Vilamba	Sanskrit	Rama	Kriti with 7 Charanams like a Pancharatnam
4.	Dheem ta-Dheem	Begada	Adi	Vilamba	Sanskrit	Sri Krishna	Tillana
5.	Dhyaayaami	Lalitha Panchama	Adi	Vilamba	Sanskrit	Srinivasa	Kriti
6.	Gaanarasamurthi	Kedara Gowla	Adi	Vilamba	Telugu	Tyagaraja Swamigal	Kriti - Chittaswara
7.	Harine Hari	Kambhoji	Misra Chapu	Vilamba	Sanskrit	Lakshmi	Kriti
8.	Jagadagadamkarni	Arabhi	Rupaka	Madhyama	Sanskrit	Lakshmi	Kriti
9.	Kalasa jaladhi	Kalyani	Adi	Madhyama	Sanskrit	Lakshmi	Kriti
10.	Lekadhiraaitha	Devamanohari	Roopaka	Madhyama	Sanskrit	Krishna	Kriti - Chittaswara
11.	Nadana janaka	Natakuranji	Dhruva	Madhyama	Sanskrit	Krishna	Geetha
12.	Mahadevi	Hindolam	Adi	Madhyama	Sanskrit	Lakshmi	Kriti
13.	Manamunesi Sadaa	Hamir Kalyani	Adi	Madhyama	Sanskrit	Lakshmi	Varna
14.	Mangalam Ambuja	Mohana	Adi	Madhyama	Sanskrit	Lakshmi	Mangalam
15.	Mangalam Tava	Jhurjuri	Adi	Madhyama	Sanskrit	Lakshmi	Mangalam
16.	Mohana Suruchera	Suddha Seemanthin	Adi	Madhyama	Sanskrit	Krishna	Kriti
17.	Naachetukami	Yamuna Kalyani	Jhampa	Madhyama	Sanskrit	God	Lyric
18.	Navaneta Iola	Hindustani Kapi	Adi Eka	Madhyama	Sanskrit	Krishna	Tisra Kandam/Kriti-chittaswara
19.	Vitada Karunireesa	Saveni	Roopaka	Madhyama	Sanskrit	Varadareja	Rama
20.	Vadethi ramanam	Umabharana	Adi	Madhyama	Sanskrit	Rama	Kriti
21.	Svarajati	Kanada	Adi	Madhyama	Sanskrit		
22.	Swarajati	Sankarabharana	Adi	Madhyama	Sanskrit		

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PURANDARA DASA & TYAGARAJA

(Their Message to the World)

By Mysore K. Vasudevachar

(In this year of 150th Aradhana of Saint Tyagaraja, we publish from our archives an article written by the great Vaggeyakara and scion of Tyagaraja Sishya Parampara on the 100th Punyathi of the Saint-bard of Tiruvaiyyar)

Of those unique personalities that have had the better part of the battle with an effacing hand of time, the most outstanding figures in the field of Kamatak Music are those of Sri Purandara Dasa and Sri Tyagaraja. By their remarkable achievements in life, they have carved out for themselves significant spots in the realm of immortal fame. Acting as a connecting link between the golden feet of the Lord and the helpless humanity, they have rendered the world ever-indebted to them. Nothing is more sacred and nothing is more binding upon us than to commemorate their sweet and revered memory and place our tributes of humble homage at their noble feet.

In the following few pages, I shall endeavour to point out how Purandara Dasa and Tyagaraja are the twin branches of the same tree and, how, whether judged from the point of the lofty ideal before them or the medium through which they carried their efforts, they stand in perfect unison. No delineation, however, of the personality of either Purandara Dasa or Tyagaraja is attempted here. For such an attempt is both futile and superfluous because the personality of man is elusive and defies analysis and superfluous because both Purandara Dasa and Tyagaraja are by no means unknown quantities to the world. Their faith, their creed, their views and opinions - they have laid them bare before the world, thereby ruling out any necessity to advocate their case. Hence, without referring to their glorious life-histories crowded with thrilling incidents, I shall take a plunge deep and direct into the heart of the subject matter.

*Isabeku Iddu Jayisabeku Irabeku
Iradirabeku*

"To be in and yet out of the world" was the motto pursued by both Purandara Dasa and Tyagaraja. They could have as well attained their

Aparoksha (eternal bliss) by leading a secluded life of devotion to God after the manner of the Yogis and Sanyasis. But they had this novel ideal before them, namely, the uplift and reformation of the evil-stricken humanity around them.

Realising the basic truth of the innumerable sayings like "Trivargaphaladas - sarve danayagna japadayaha ekam Sangeeta Vignam chaturvarga phalapradam" and "Sisurvetti Pasurvetti Vetti Ganarasam phanee", realising that it is only the devotional music that has mysterious power of uniting God and Man with a bond of invisible beauty, they resolved to realise at one and the same time their twin motives - Self-attainment of the Divine Grace and the purification of the world beneath through this art of arts, Divine Music.

The hundreds and thousands of their compositions are essentially an echo of their heart lamenting over the crimes and evils of the world, a genuine reflection of the spontaneous flow of their love and sympathy for the human lot and an ardent and unswerving will to restore the world back to the path of salvation. Dharmakke Kai, Baratikala and Duduku gala provide excellent examples of that class of Keerthanams wherein their authors have shed tears of pity and sympathy on the corrupt world in the grip of Arishadvargas. And, in a number of Kritis, they set out to drive home to the hearts of the suffering masses the fundamental codes of philosophy and morality. Samsaravemba Bhagyavirali, Manavashodhisabeku, Holatiholaya, Ivavaralla, Nambadiru Edeha Nityavalla, Samsarulaite Emayya, Manasunilpa Saktileka pote, Dwaitamu Sukhama Adhvaitamu Sukhama. Compositions of this type are full of philosophy rendered in an easily graspable mode. The philosophical treatises such as the Upanishads which had hitherto remained a sealed book for men of ordinary calibre were brought for the benefit of the world within intelligible compass.

It is possible to prove that every philosophical dictum enunciated in each of their innumerable compositions has its root in the *Upanishads* and *Puranas*. To quote one or two instances : *Haridasarige Sariyunte* and *Gangadi Sakhalatheertha* are nothing but a re-rendering in simple and easily understandable Kannada of *Darshanadeva Sadhaveha Yatrachchutodhara Katha Prasanghaha Talraiva Ganga Yamunacha Venu*. These very same ideas have been expressed in soft-sounding Telugu language by Tyagaraja in his Kritis "*Ramabhakti Samrajyamemanavula Kabbeno Manasa Amanavula Sandarshana Atyanta Brahmanandame Manasa*".

It is on this score that the compositions of Purandara dasa and Tyagaraja have been most deservedly termed Purandaropanishat and Tyagabrahmopanishat. Further, for the guidance of the world, the fundamental moral precepts are laid out in the most unequivocal terms. *Dhyanaime Varamaina Ganga Snamamu, Nara Nadamela Harinama, Harikotta Kalake, Muthaiyide Yegeerabeku, Paraloka Sadhaname Manasa, Mosabeku Vinave* are some of the innumerable compositions that are pregnant with codes of morality.

Having fully realised the basic truth- "*Anyatha Sharanam nasthi twameva Sharanam mama*", -both Sri Prandara Dasa and Sri Tyagaraja have, in many of their Keertanas such as *Ninagaru Sariyilla Yenage Anya Gatiilla, Sakala Grahabela neene, Ninnuvina Sukhamugana, Grahabalame Sri Ramanugraha balame balamu, etc.*, vividly bring home to the minds of the people the greatness of God and the littleness of man, *Naichyanu Sandhana* and theentire dependence of the latter upon the Supreme Lord.

It is their firm convention that it is only through the system of Navavidha Bhakti (Shravanam, Keertanam, Smaranam, Padasevanam, Archanam, Vandanam, Dasyam, Atmanivedanam, and Sakhyam) that one can cherish an unstinted, unbounded Love of Lord. At the same time they are fully aware that this path to Salvation is by no means a mere bed of roses so that anybody can embark upon it and reach the desired destination.

There is a pretty large number of Keerthanas such as *Moodha bailane drudha Bakutiya, Sadara Vallavo Nija Bhakti, Adikadu Ramabhajana, Oorake Kalguna Ramuni Bhakti* wherein they have warned us against the endless impending obstacles in our endeavour to cherish this unswerving Love of the Lord.

They have pointed out in the clearest possible terms that Truth and Virtue are of far greater value than rites and ceremonies and it is the inward purity of mind and no longer the pomp and parade of religion that enables us to realise our long cherished ideal. The several Keerthanas of Purandara Dasa and Tyagaraja that belong to that category of Utsava Sampradaya are calculated to promote in us this unswerving Love towards the Lord. *Guruvina Gulame Naguvatanaka Mukthi Dorayadanne, Guruleka Etuvanti Gunigi Teliyaka Bodu, Harinama Keertane Anudhina Malpage, Mokshamu Galada, Sangeeta Gnanamu Bhaktivina, Talabeku Takka Melabeku, Sogasugamrudanga Talamu, Swaragasudharasa Yuta Bhakti, Rama Kathanandabdhiiyuta, Sangeeta Sastra Gnanamu Sarupya Saukhyadame Manasa* are some of those invaluable compositions which declare in a nutshell the keynote of their gospel, namely, Devotional Music through Guroopadesa is the easiest and surest path to salvation.

Thus both Purandara Dasa and Tyagaraja set out on a common journey along a common route to reach a common destination. And, a careful study of philosophy leads us to the inevitable conclusion that Sri Tyagaraja is essentially an offspring of the Dasakuta.

No greater service to these great benefactors of the world can be done and no other service will be more welcomed by them than this - shaping our destiny along the lines of their golden gospel ever ringing in our ears, "Be in and yet out of the world" and find a way out of it through "Bhaktiyuta Sangeetha Marga through Guroopadesha".

Courtesy : Commemoration Souvenir of 1947.

From the Archives

A VISION OF TYAGARAJA

By Y. Mahalinga Sastri B.A., B.L.

I cannot say if it was a dream-vision or a reality. It was a strange but a soul awakening experience. It was not yet the hour of dawn. The darkness of the night was just dispersing. The woods became filled with a thrill of joy. From tree to tree, the noisy birds firsked about and played. The breeze from the lotus pond sprang up laden with freshest odour. The harmless among the animals of the forest stepped into light with a sense of security. Yonder stood the wild elephant at the brink of a cataract, playing against the waterfall with its capering trunk. In the heart of that forest crawled the meandering Thamasa looking like the spotless purity of the atmosphere metamorphosed into a flowing river; and like the mystic calm of the sacred morning hour freezing into form, knee-deep in the waters, was seen the sage Valmiki absorbed in his morning meditations. From this profound meditative calm, Valmiki was roused by the ambrosial flow of a music which kissed his ears. He wondered :

Is it the joyous song of the cuckoo sweet throated because of it chewing the mango blossoms? Is it the blended harmony of the merry bees sucking the honey from fresh blossoming flowers? Or, is it the music of the Universal Soul within myself - rendered audible by my meditative self-absorption at this holy morning hour? I hear words articulated, in this stream of melody

Valmiki looked towards the sky and descried the holy sage Narada singing and playing upon his vina, floating as it were in an ocean of delight, full heavy and self-forgotful. The strain which reached Valmiki's ears bore the form of an ec-static interjection in these terms.

As whom did the great ones know you? Whether as Siva, or as Madhava or as Kamalabhava (the Lotus-born Brahma) or as this Supreme Brahman? And what way did they worship you?

Narada, resplendent with his penance-born halo shone like another Sun emerging from the South. Valmiki became all ears and stood

absorbed heart and soul in the spell of the music.

His soul brimmed with emotion and experienced a limitless expansion. His hairs stood on end, his eyes shed tears of joy, He questioned himself:

This indeed is a common Indian song, but yet it instils into me a devotional ecstasy, which I have hitherto never experienced. What a superbly charming blend of word and tune is this! Could Rama ever repay this music by incarnating a thousand times as a bondsman for every syllable contained in it? I very much doubt.

Valmiki was beside himself with thoughts in this strain, Narada was beside himself with his music. The deer skin upper garment of Narada slipped from its position and dropped down. He looked beneath and found that his garment had stuck in the hands of Valmiki, outstretched in a pose of self-absorbed wonder.

Is it you, Valmiki?"

"Verily, my revered Master."

"Luckily, my upper garment sticking in your hands did not get soaked in water."

Narada descended.

Valmiki : This is an auspicious day for me. I am once again before my Guru, who, long ago, revealed unto me the heroic doings of Rama. I feel as if I am on the threshold of a newer revelation, for the saying that a meeting with great souls always brings in its train a lucky epoch, never fails. I thirst to know whose song it was that you are now singing with rapture. It seemed a common song, the utterance of a man on earth. Who is that mortal from whose tongue the Goddess Saraswathi did thus emerge with a swelling music of her lyre? Who is that memorable exemplar of high devotion?

Narada : What matters to the great poet of the Ramayana, who this bard is?

Valmiki : My revered Master! It was you who vouchsafed to me a knowledge of doings of Rama and made me the first poet of this world. Hear me, my compassionate Guru! I long to know all about the bard whose song you sang. Indeed, from time to time, great souls do make their appearance in the world of mortals for their uplift. What personality is it that now sanctifies human life with touch of its effulgence?

Narada : It is strange that you have not heard of him till now, - of Tyagaraja living in the sacred land watered by the five rivers; the devotee, to hear whose soul-enrapturing music the Gandharvas, Yakshas and Kinnaras with the celestial nymphs daily throng to earth.

Valmiki : In truth, I never did hear him. If even you should thus sing his song with rapture, he must indeed be blessed in a Guru who wrought such a divine transformation in him. But it needs no speculation; for, who else could have been the Guru except your own revered self? You are the Guru Universal who endows mortals with priceless devotion which conduces to eternal bliss. Do I not stand here as a notable example of the fruits of a beneficent grace?

Narada : My dear Valmiki! The guidance of a Guru can never go far unless the individual possesses aptitudes for higher attainment. Can it be ever claimed that my teaching by itself has had the effect of placing the Lord of Vaikuntha Himself at the beck and call of Tyagaraja? For, not infrequently does the Lord, in the form of Sri Rama, appear before the great devotee with dutiful promptness.

Valmiki : My Lord! the desire to learn about great men stimulates my curiosity. Pray, let me become a purer man for hearing from you at least one instance of the Lord's grace vouchsafed to Tyagaraja.

Narada : Yes. Once when Tyagaraja was being borne in a palanquin by his pupils through a forest, he was waylaid by a band of robbers who used slings to frighten the travellers. Tyagaraja and his party were defenceless against the darts. In that moment of affliction, Tyagaraja invoked Rama to protect him and his pupils in a song beginning with the words; 'In front, at the back and on both sides, cover me up On Rama! Oh, The destroyer of Mura! Come, come, come, my succour!' Immediately, Rama and Lakshmana appeared on the scene disguised as warriors with bows and arrows and drove away the robbers. Many are the instances in which the Lord has thus manifested Himself as Sri Rama to Tyagaraja.

Valmiki : Ah, my noble preceptor! How I wish to see that Mahatma at once!

Narada : Yes, you shall at once see him.

Sri Tyagaraja was seen seated before the image of Sri Rama and singing to the accompaniment of his Tambura. The melody of his music filled like a flood in the space between the four walls and overflowed as far as the ear could reach. Nobody could then have guessed when he began to sing or when he was likely to finish. The ordinary eye could perceive only the four pupils in front of him but not the invisible band of

Gandharvas and Apsara damsels who were accompanying his music with lute, flute, and mrudanga. Did the celestial inhabitants come there in search of the ambrosial music of Tyagaraja which fed the soul, discarding the heavenly nectar which fed only the body?

(Tyagaraja never set to music words deliberately composed. From his devoted heart songs welled up like streams from the spring. Tyagaraja employed his music in place of penance and austerity to please guardian Deity.)

Tyagaraja was offering a cup of milk. The offer itself was couched in a musical strain. Valmiki and Narada just then entering, described with wonder, Rama, invisible to mortal eyes, drinking the milk from the proffered cup. They announced themselves to Tyagaraja. Tyagaraja welcomed them with great humility and sang in commemoration of their visits the following among other songs :

"This indeed is a lucky day."

"Hail, Narada, who like the bee plays round the lotus pond of melody."

He then sang in praise of the great poet of Valmiki thus :

The taste of the sweet accounts of Rama's deeds are worth a kingdom. Like a swift vessel it steers you past the ocean-like expanse of enthralling desires. It saves you from the evil influence of Kali.

The Rishi visitors were listening with great interest. They asked Tyagaraja to speak out the highest truth he had learned in life, Tyagaraja replied in a song that in his view devotion to Sri Rama was the Empire which man's mind should always seek to attain.

Valmiki felt that the veil which hung before his eyes had been removed and lost in admiration he said :

You are a pure soul, I had understood Rama only as the Son of Dasaratha and descendant of Ikshvaku. I never knew him as the Supreme Being.

Tyagaraja was abashed on hearing himself thus praised. With head bowed down, and in faltering voice he said :

My lord, like Ishwara who proclaimed the Vedas, like Bhagiratha who brought down the Ganga into the world from above, you as the first poet created the Ramayana which purifies and uplifts all living beings. I am but an ignorant mortal. I shrink like an offender when you compliment me upon my achievements."

Just then, Narada intervened and said :

Tyagaraja ! It was you that described the great war of Rama against Ravana, conceiving Rama as but a human being, the son of Dasaratha and a descendant of Ikshvaku. By dint of meditation, you after long ages, realised that Rama is not different from the Supreme Brahman. You are Valmiki's next but greater incarnation."

But when Tyagaraja lifted up his head, the Rishi-visitors had disappeared. Tyagaraja wondered whether it was a dream-vision or a reality and so do I.

(Translation from the author's essay in Tamil
- Courtesy : The Triveni)

"VISUAL" STIMULUS

Many vocalists, male and female, young and old close their eyes as they perform. Some faces absorb this as a natural habit while some faces tend to betray it as bordering the unnatural. Jocularly it may be said that a few close their eyes unable to bear the agony of the audience forced to sit and listen. Several musicians do it with a view to have as an inward assessment, audit and appreciation of the rendition. I approached Brigadier (Hon.) B. Ramamurthy, the eminent Neuro Surgeon and great Rasika on this. He states:

"You have mentioned this as a defect. I would have thought otherwise. The visual stimulus is a most powerful impulse and shutting this out helps concentration. That is why in meditation you are advised to keep eyes closed.

"Of course, if one has become a great *yogi*, then one can meditate the eyes open. Many people when they are listening to a lecture or a concert close their eyes to enjoy more. In fact, I would have thought that it adds to the exquisiteness of music when singers close their eyes and sing and not go on looking at the personalities in the audience."

So, the most competent doctor blessed the habit of the practice. Musician, Wish you all the Best out of the musical *yoga*!

— N. Rajagopalan in *The Fragrant Garland*

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"MUSICAL SAINT FINDS HIS MENAKA"

By 'Garland' N. Rajagopalan

Yogendra, now Vidyabhushana, is a musical soul blest with a mellifluous, emotion-packed voice that rings through the concert hall spreading lavish spiritual fervour and musical fragrance satisfying the congnescenti and the lay Rasika. There is filtered clarity and absolute conviction in his rendition. After initial lessons under a musical father, he had training under B.V. Narayana Aithal, Sangita Kalanidhi R.K. Srikantan and T.V. Gopalakrishnan, the multi-faceted artiste. He has been giving concerts at the different centres of South India and his concerts draw the devout, the music-lover, etc., in large numbers. In fact, since his debut fifteen years back, he has been attracting ever-increasing audiences evoking effective rapport and involvement.

Vidyabhushana was born on July 3, 1952 at Subramanya, DK District of Karnataka, of K Govindacharya, an actor and musicologist and Mandakini Amma. Govindacharya was the founder of the Vagiswari Sangita Nataka Sabha. Musical background and training under titans helped to clothe the musical acumen of Vidyabhushana with verve and vitality. His *manodharma* is weighty and well-articulated. He is the recipient of honours and has given cassettes nearing a hundred.

In his boyhood, Yogendra had taken to renunciation. It was being stated that he had been inveigled into monastic order early in boyhood as it happens in many other cases and that he had positive reservations

against such practice as they lacked conviction and commitment on the part of the renunciate. This view is however debatable. Yogendra became Sri Vidyabhushana Tirtha Sripadaru. Well-versed in Madhwa Philosophy, Tarka Sastra and Sanskrit Sahitya, he was the Pontiff of Sri Samputa Narasimhaswamy Subrahmanya Mutt, Kukke in Karnataka till the closing hours of April 1997.

Presumably the Peetham had not been entirely a comfortable bed of repose to the learned, musical Swamiji though he received copious reverence and enjoyed popularity. Perhaps he had all along been an unwilling occupant of the Peetham, which, incidentally, is an important one to Madhawa Philosophy. The respected stature and popularity he commanded had evidently not been able to subserve the view 'Once a Sanyasi, always a Sanyasi'. Like Edward VIII (20 01 1936 - 11 10 1936) abdication was no problem to him. Whether it had been a long, persisting and lurking feeling or it came about recently, only he could tell. On May 1, 1997, he renounced the pontificate and entered on Grahastasrama the next day itself.

The Menaka, immediately instrumental to lead him into the much lauded Grahastasrama, came in the person of the 26-year old Rama, a law student. She found herself in deep genuine love with the Swamiji whose concerts she had attended

earlier. She was, it is said, determined to marry the Swamiji like some puranic celebrities. The Swamiji (46) responded with warmth after a time, renounced the Pontificate and took the hand of Rama as consort. Disparity in age deterred them not. Advice from devotees and colleagues failed to restrain the Vidyabhushana from the destined course. Destiny established its full sway and the dramatic event is now a *fait accompli*!

The distinguished musicologist and critic, B.V.K. Sastry, mentions that Vidyabhushana was not the first Sanyasi to discard ochre robes and enter into wedded life as there was one from the Ashtamathas of Udupi who had done so. He adds that the Udupi tradition has been to choose only a Brahmachari for the Peetha, though a greedy parent may manage to get his child chosen even where the boy is reluctant.

Sri Vidyabhushana Sripadaru has now become a mere Vidyabhushana shorn of the aura of the Pontiff. Relieved of the spiritual and religious duties, Vidyabhushana is now free to explore the extensive and undefinable frontiers of classical music and its labyrinths. What may perhaps be a loss to religion may well be a gain to the art!

But an important and valid point calls for notice. Having thrown away his ochreous robes and the yogic image, the erstwhile

yogic spell that lent a hallowed image among the spiritually responsive audience is now unavailable. While the old age 'Vivaham Vidya nasanam' is inapplicable here, one is left to surmise whether Vidyabhushana will be able to climb up the slippery ladder of a professional musician or like a Jaru will slip down to the dismay of many who wish him well. He is presently drawing full and packed houses. But will he be able to wade through successfully amidst the din and dust of professional compulsions and competition having spent four decades of his impressional part of his life in revered monastic life and respected seclusion? That segment of the audience comprising scores of devotees and spiritual enthusiasts may now be under little compulsion to frequent his concerts as before. Vidyabhushana may no more evoke these sympathetic chords vibrating in unison and in chorus chanting with animated gusto that the concert would be a success even before the artiste invokes the Lord-Dispeller of Impediments (Vinayaka).

As B.V.K. Sastry thoughtfully observes, "The real test comes when the devotee crowd dwindles and he faces the hard-boiled rasikas. And it takes time".

Perhaps the auspicious star of 'Rama', the Sakti behind this Siva, may raise the Vidyabhushana to Everestian heights!

PANDIT BHATKHANDE MEMORIAL LECTURES

"MELATRAYA"

The fourth series of Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande Memorial Lectures, instituted by the Indian Musicological Society (IMS) were delivered in Madras, by Prof. R.Sathyanarayana (Bangalore), a wellknown musicologist and author of many books. Organised in collaboration with the Department of Indian Music, University of Madras, Chennai, the lectures had a 3-day schedule, from 19th to 21st December 1996. Dr.Smt. Sushila Rani Patel (Bombay) in her welcome speech, spoke on the services rendered by Pandit Bhatkhande to musicology in India and urged the student and teacher community connected with music - particularly in the Universities - to explore new avenues of research in the field of music, to take advantage of the new technologies, to go beyond the curriculum and provide new insights in discovering inter - connectedness of all arts.

Dr.P.K. Ponnuswamy, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Madras, in his inaugural address, congratulated the Indian Musicological Society for its invaluable contribution to the field of musicology by the means of various publications. He hoped that these lectures would help narrow down on the gap between theory and practice of music.

The topic of the lecture series was "MELATRAYA", encompassing three kinds of 'Mela', - denoting Swara-mela, Vina-mela and Raga-mela. After a brief reference to Pt. Bhatkhande's visit to South India, early in this century and his contribution to music, Prof. Sathyanarayana in his first-day lecture focused his attention on Swara-mela. After a brief explanation of the word "Mela", the speaker pointed out that in Indian Music, the scales kept on changing and in its course, the system developed a large number of parental archetype, the "Grama". Due to

historical reasons, only one Grama remained, out of the three, with twenty two smaller steps (Srutis) in between the scale. After referring to the three fundamental types of Svara-s, with the intervals of four, three and two Sruti-s, Prof. Sathyanarayana pointed out that *Sangeet Ratnakar* speaks of seven Suddha and twelve Vikrit notes, but it was Vidyaranya who tried to change the Grama-Murcchana concept and classified Raga-s under groups of Svara patterns of seven notes and called them "Mela". The whole melodic movement was reationalised into one, the Shadja Grama, and a fixed tonic came into existence. Not only that, it gave rise to a fixed Sadharana and Antara Gandhara-s and Kaisiki and Kakali Nishada-s, by assigning a maximum number of five Sruti-s to Gandhara and Nishada which is an important step in the music history.

"*Paryayatatva*" or the equivalence of two adjacent notes is also an important principle evolved. Shadja and Pancama were '*Prakrti*'. Another important concept was that a note would not become a Vikriti at its own position, but be a Vikriti by moving to the next succeeding position(s) and never to the previous position(s). Thus a same Svarasthana can give rise to two denominations of adjacent notes called '*Paryaya*'. This was the basis for the various Mela Schemes.

Later on, due to *Pratinidhi - Tatva*, the Antara-Gadhara was shifted by one Sruti to Cyuta-Madyama position (12) and the Kakali-Nishada to the Cyuta-Shadja position (3) and the Prati-Madhyama (Pancama of the Madhyama-Grama) at the 16th Sruti position. These things came into existence from the period of Venkatamakhin. Thus a constant Shadja and Pancama, four sets of *Paryaya* notes and the representation by *Pratinidhi-Tatva* led to scale

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Svara-s. Hence it can be summed up that the modern scale, the "SVARA MELA" evolved from Venkatamakhin's time.

In the case of Hindustani music, there are twelve semitons, with Shadja and Pancama being constant and two varieties existing for Rashabha, Gandhara, Madhyama, Dhaivata and Nishada. The scale degrees corresponding to those of Bilaval. That, or to Dhirasankarabharana Mela have the prefix 'Suddha' and the other degrees are prefixed 'Komal' or 'Tivra' according to their relation to the respective 'Suddha' variety. The speaker pointed out that what was used till then was only a theoretical model for fixing the Svara-s on the Sruti scale. To develop a theoretical mode, a practical model must be designed, which can be represented conventionally as a source - Pramana called the Vina Mela

In his second lecture, Prof. Sathyanarayana, started by referring to a doubt raised by a person as to how could one derive intervals like the 4,3,2 Sruti-s, and what does it mean for the performer? If, for instance, when a set of people are asked to sing, particular note with a common Adhara Sruti, they all agree by convention. Thus a theoretical model can be objectively fixed, so that it becomes feasible for performance. And such a thing is possible only on a chordophone like Vina. Thus, the derivation and explanation of Svara-s on a chordophone (vina) is the "VINA MELA

Referring to the earlier Texts on music, the speaker pointed out that the description of stringed instruments is not available in *Brhaddesi*; and that Nanyadeva gives a qualitative description and added that it is Sarngadeva who gives a detailed explanation. He uses the term "*Sarika*" for the fret of the vina. There are 14 frets and the values of the sizes of the frets are also given very precisely. The scale developed by Sarngadeva was a Saptaka; and this was designed to accommodate the music of his time

"*Kinnari*" is the fore-runner of the later *Ekatantri* Vina. Here, all notes occur in a single string, which is an important criteria for a Vina performer. This would be the standard for practical and theoretical derivations. Later, Venkatamakhin says, that the Vina in which all the twelve notes occur on the same string together, is the "Madhya Mela Vina".

A reference to the Ekaraga Mela Vina is found in a Kannada work, "*Bhasavapurana*" by Bhimakavi of the 13th Century. Interestingly, this is not mentioned in Kallinatha's commentary to the *Sangita Ratnakara*

The Vina players used two types of Vina-s: - Suddhamela Vina and Madhyamela-Vina. Each was again of two types - Eka-Raga and Akhila-Raga or Sarva-Raga. The main objective of the Vina player was to provide a set of musical notes in one register on comparison. Of all these Vina-s Suddhamela-Vina was taken as the Prakrit. New innovations have been tried and introduced by so many scholars.

The practice of playing a note in the previous string, even when available in the next string was termed as "Pakka Sarani". The Raghunathabhupala-Mela-Vina can be said rightly as the fore-runner of today's "Tanjavur Vina". The modern Vina is not the one innovated by Govinda Dikshitar, but by Tulajendra, which is evident from a portion of the unpublished portion of the *Sangita Samamta*. He explained that the purpose of Vinamela is to fulfil the needs of the performer and also the empirical need of the system

Prof Sathyanarayana, in his third and concluding discourse elaborated on the concept of Raga-Mela. An eclectic approach of classifying two or three melodies under one head in ancient times was the "Jati", in which the criteria was Graha, Amisa and Nyasa Svara-s. Then the genetic approach was relating the set of Raga-s to

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the parental nature with regard to the intervallic content. Finally, the mode of classification was a progressive departure in similarity, which gave rise to an 'evolute', to form Grama, Bhasha, Vibhasha and Antara Bhasha Raga-s. Further came the 'Anga' raga-s; Raganga, Upanga, Bhashanga and Kriyanga Raga-s.

A drastic change that took place between the 15th and the 17th centuries was that the Grama system gradually yielded place to the Mela system. Generally, the rules must be elastic to accommodate practice and incorporate the changes. Though the Mela system is first spoken of by Vidyaranya, the first available text is the *Svaramelakalanidhi* of Ramamatya. Two or three Raga-s of same intervals were put under one group, and the leader of the group was named by the familiar Raga of that group. Thus it was possible to evolve a system with all the seven notes grouped together under one.

Prof. Sathyanarayana in further elaboration, said that the systematization of all the possible parental structures are the "Mela". Venkatamakhi worked out the mathematical possibilities of Mela-s and arrived at seventy two. His system has got twelve semitones divided into two segments - Purvanga and Uttaranga. The six in Purvanga takes up six from the Uttaranga to form 36; and with two Madhyamas it becomes seventy-two Mela-s. Pundarika Vitthala's Mela were more or less same as those of Venkatamakhi's, but he employed yet another Gandhara, namely the Urdhava-Gandhara, and so there were totally ninety Mela-s. Somanatha derived 960 Mela-s with fifteen chromatic intervals, which naturally included the Mela-s of Venkatamakhi and Pundarika Vitthala. Ahobala has classified the notes as Purva, Komala for Svaras having intervals lesser than the corresponding Suddha Svara-s and Tivra, Tivratara, Tivratama and Atitivratama

for intervals of higher values. There are some overlappings - Sadharana-s. Thus his system has got a total number of 21,340 Mela-s. All present Mela has a complement of seven notes, arranged in one order, having one kind of Svara-s all derived by Paryayatatva. Different people, used different number of intervals for the derivation of their Mela-s.

In "*Meladhikaralakshna*", an unpublished work, there are thirty - four Svara names in Purvanga and Uttaranga. Thus with four Madhyama-s, it becomes 4, 624 Mela-s

Prof. Sambanurthy evolved three Melakarta systems; Krishna Chandra Pisharoti devised a system which had thirty two Mukhya Mela-s, eighty four Sampurna Mela-s and 984 Sankirna Melas. Nagasvaram Ponnusvami Pillai had a strong idea that the Vivadi-s are to be 'barred' and the Mela is of value, only if it avoids Vivadi-s. But without Vivadi the Vadi or the *Amara* is not possible. The seventy-two Melakarta-s with Vivadi-s is actually a fact of reality. Tyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar have composed in these Raga-s

Providing an integrated synoptic view of the fundamentals of the Indian Music System, the lectures underlined that Melatraya embraces the conceptual trilogy of Svaramela, Vinamela and Ragamela. It is universal in scope to all melodic organization in world music. In Svaramela and Vinamela and is specific to homophonic systems, especially Indian Music in Ragamela. It has remained a foundational and formative principle in Indian Music and has been operational since the earliest time, in both Karnatak Music and Hindustani Music throughout their evolution. It is pan-Indian in its original connotation

(Abridged Report by Ms. V.Premalatha - U.G.C. Junior Research Fellow, Dept. of Indian Music, University of Madras.

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THE BHAGAVATHA TRADITION

By V.V. Sadagopan

Devotional music occupies an important position in India. Right through the centuries, it has shaped and sustained the wider musical culture of country. In the pursuit of spiritual perfection, music is considered no less important than devotion. I am the Samaveda among the Vedas - says the Lord, and that is the Veda which is always sung. The Alwar-s and the Nayanmar-s of the South, the Vaishnava saints of the North, all chose the vehicle of music to sing the praise of the Lord and to attain salvation.

The general name given to devotional singing is Kirtana, though the Kirtana of one region differs greatly from that of another. South India has evolved a rich and varied tradition which may be termed the Bhagavata tradition. Its outstanding characteristic is that, by and large, it is cast in the classical mould of Karnatak music. In addition it has assimilated some of the best folk melodies and also elements from the North Indian Kirtana tradition. It has thus acted as a great reconciler between the classes and the masses, between the North and the South.

ENTERTAINING, ENNOBLING

In its main form, it is musical worship of a high order. In this there is a place for the most gifted musician and the less gifted and even the layman. The Bhagavata (literally, man of God) is a competent musician, and he leads the other devotees in congregational singing and dancing. Here one hears an exemplary combination of popular and classical music, at once entertaining and ennobling. The classical, semi-classical and stylised folk, all find a place in the repertory. Solo and group songs

are alternated, and so are verses unbound by rhythm and songs set to rhythm. In the correct tradition, verbal sentiment is not allowed to overshadow the musical content. A just balance is aimed at and, more often than not, there is a perfect blending of the two. Tyagaraja, the greatest saint singer and composer of the last century, greatly enriched the tradition and resolved the conflict between the devotional and the aesthetical.

He was as much a giant among Bhagavata-s as among musicians and composers. Long before him, in the 15th century, lived Tallapakam Chinnayya, the founder of modern Bhajana Paddhati. And there were others like Jayadeva, Chaitanya, Purandara Dasa, Bhadrachala Ramadas, Narayana Tirtha, Sadashiva Brahmendra, Bodendraswamy, Sreedhara Ayyaval and Sadguruswamy all dedicated to the Lord and music. Tyagaraja inherited the precious heritage left by the great souls and enriched it with his own contribution. And he took the message of devotional music to the people - not waiting for them to come to him - choosing a life of poverty and self-sacrifice. He converted the mere Gayaka into a Bhagavatha. Thanks to him and saint-singers before, the South enjoys the unique position and wide spread musical awareness. The concert music of the music hall may be described as sophisticated Bhagavatha Music.

Once a week, and such important occasions as Ekadasi, music-minded devotees assemble at night in Bhajana Mathas or private houses and make a night club of it - but how different! Bhajana forms the first part of the session. The proceedings starts with what

is known as Pundarikam, chanted in unison with Adhara Shruti, initiated by the leader and taken up by the congregation.

Then come Namavalies, names of the Lord sung with ease and abandon in soulful melodies. In a sense, all this is an exercise in raga elaboration. Music is the main thing, the harmonious blending of voices with a Tambura Shruti, the cross rhythmic play on the Mrudangam and Jalras and Chiplas providing a highly pleasing musical effect. The names of the Lord are capable of infinite repetition, and the absence of formal sentiments and subjective emotions, save that of Bhakti is noticeable in this type of song. It is only an extension of this set up which we find in the most sophisticated Pallavies on the concert platform, as for instance: *Krishna Murare, Kesava Murare, Madhava Hare, Mukunda Govinda Murare*. Or, this : *Hare Rama Govinda Murare, Mukunda Soure, Murahara*. The Supreme Lord is to be understood by the heart, by thought, by mind. "Those who know Him thus become immortal," says the *Kathopanishad*. Repetition of His names, as in Namavalis, helps one to tune one's mind to the high pitch necessary for such apprehension. With music it becomes easy. Tyagaraja, time and again, has emphasised this in his compositions. *Namasmarana* was made meaningful by his insistence on the character of music in which it was conveyed. If we understand him well there is only one kind of music which is fit to be termed music, and that is *Nadayoga* through *Namasmarana*.

Then there are slokas elaborated in Ragas in praise of the Lord and the different manifestations. Benedictory and invocatory songs, the *Ashtapadis* of Jayadara, the *Tarangas* of Narayana Tirtha, the songs of other composers, such as those of Purandaradasa, Bhadrachala Ramadas, Tyagaraja, Gopalakrishna Bharati and also the

Abangs of Tukaram and Bhajans of Tulsi, Kabir and Mira follow. The artistic arrangement of sloka, song and *Namavali* following each other is kept up as far as possible.

Then comes *Divyanama*. Singing *Divyanama. Sankirtana-s* a select group of devotees dances round lighted lamp. The lamp represents the Paramatma and the dancing Bhagavata-s the Jivatma. The famous *Gopikagitam* from the Bhagavata, embodying *Rasa Lila*, is also sung. The yearning of the individual soul for union with the Oversoul is best expressed in the form of the *nayaka-nayaki bhava*. Only he is Purusha, and all beings, male or female are Prakriti, i.e. feminine. To watch the Bhagavathers dance uninhibitedly ("*Visriya lajjam*") can be an elevating experience. The ego is thoroughly effaced, and after identification with the Supreme, however transient, it returns chastened and ennobled.

There are also mobile Bhajana partires. Going round the town or village in the early hours of the morning sets a spiritual tone for the activities of the day to follow. Throughout the month of Marga (December - January), and on other important occasions also during the year, Bhajana-s of Namavali, Divyanamasankirtana, the Tevaram, the Tiruppavai and the Tiruvembavai are sung by parties of devotees going round. Bhajana parties also follow processional deities during festivals. The Bhagavata of the most dedicated order does unchavritti bhajana every morning. Unchavritti attracts charity for purely spiritual ends.

A branch of the Bhagavata tradition is the employment of music for story-telling. This is called the Harikatha Kalakshepam; and the performer, the Bhagavata. Here, too, the music is of a high order. Only talented musicians take to this art and they have been in a large measure responsible for

popularising many a melody, of classical Karnatak music. Some of them are literary scholars as well, and their renderings of compositions are noteworthy for the fine equilibrium between Sangita and Sahitya. Of late, however, a certain imbalance is discernible in this respect, the music being sacrificed for the sake of sense of word by ununderstanding exponents. It has its repercussions on the concert platform also. Unless this trend is checked, music stands greatly to suffer.

DANCE-DRAMAS

There is a place also for drama in the Bhagavata tradition. The Bhagavata Mela Natakam was the answer of the Bhagavata to the deteriorating standards in art and ethics. Kuchipudi in Andhra Pradesh appears to have evolved this type of Bhagavata dance-drama. Later Venkatarama Sastri of Merattur in Tanjore district, a contemporary of Tyagaraja, composed a number of dance-dramas, taught them to his disciples, and conducted the plays on important festive occasions. In the old days, these Nataka-s used to be performed during annual festivals in places like Merattur, Soolamangalam and Teppurmanallur. Consequent on the neglect of villages by the intelligentsia, these dance-dramas have also fallen into neglect. It was gratifying to note that the Kalakshetra of Adyar, under Rukmini Devi, took up the task of their refinement.

Thus it will be seen that the Bhagavata tradition in its various forms is what may be described as the direct method in musical education. More, it is education itself through music. Education through art is an accepted principle now, and this has been practised in our country for ages. In the authentic tradition - post Tyagaraja, at any rate - there is no place for exaggerated

feeling or over-emphasis on one thing or the other in respect of the music and words of a song. If at all, the emphasis on music is greater. This will be evident to anyone who listens to such masters as Gopalakrishna Bhagavata of Pudukkottai, doyen of the Bhagavata tradition, highly respected by musicians and masses alike. Like Tyagaraja's, his renunciation is complete. His daily life of Unchavritti, Puja, Bhajana and Dolotsavam is a marvel in this age of materialism.

The truly religious spirit which sees Him in all beings and all things in Him is manifest in Bhagavata congregations. The forms and rituals attached to these provide an interesting experience in sublimated aesthetic enjoyment. New experiments are welcome provided they are based on respect for the old tradition, and the spirit is truly musical and devotional.

A worth-while experiment, a modern adaptation of the Bhagavata tradition can be a Ganagoshti for every village or group of villages. Such a thing could rouse people to active participation not only in music but in all the good things of life. If musicians dedicate themselves to this end and spread themselves throughout the country, in towns and villages, and canalise the musical gifts of the people, the face of India, I believe, can be changed in the course of a few years. The emotional integration of the nation, which is the anxious concern of all thinking people, is best achieved through the medium of music and allied arts. Music coupled with piety can bind people together as nothing else can. This is truly the Bhagavata approach.

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"ANANDA IN KANKARYA"

("If only Annamacharya was known to the world 150 years ago, the history of South Indian Music would have been rewritten", proclaims a brochure. Nevertheless it is never too late. The discovery of the copper plates on which this 15th century Pada Kavita Pitamaha and Sankirtanacharya had engraved his compositions and "locked in a room within the temple premises of his deity Sri Venkateswara on the Tirumala Hills," has thrown open the vast treasure he had bequeathed to the world of music, to the thrill of Bhaktas. Though he is said to have composed over 30,000 Padas, a little less than half the number (14,500) are available to us. Propagating these in itself would be a great service to music and to the Saint-poet of the Tirumala Hills.

And it is well known that the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam has been rendering yeoman service in propagating and popularising the bard's Sankeertanas. Recently Chennai joined hands with TTD, Tirupati to propagate Annamayya Padas by holding concerts every month on the day of "Shravana" (Tiruvonam), the Lord's star at the local TTD temple in T.Nagar. More. The TTD, Chennai, has more ambitious plans - of organising such concerts every week.

SHANMUKHA publishes below the introductory speech delivered by that great industrialist, an ardent votary of Karnatak Music Shri P.Obul Reddy, at the inauguration of "Annamacharya Aradhana Mohotsavam" at TTD, Chennai on April 13th 1997.)

All saints share the common experience of devotional ecstasy. So are the songs of Annamacharya and they can be described as the eternal verities of divinity. His contributions are at once musical, devotional, religious and philosophical. The Highest, the Supreme, Venkatesa for Annamacharya stands exalted above everything and his Sankirtanas testify to the appropriateness of the blend of the mystical and Bhakti aspects. The highest fulfilment of human existence, as Annamacharya has conveyed through his hymns, is surrender to the Lord of the Seven Hills. Annamacharya has shown that spiritual perfection is within the reach of the human being.

The redeeming feature in Saint Annamacharya's life is Ananda in Kankarya. In this effort he was able to harmonise the soul's devotional inwardness with the delight of songs, a way to attain the bliss of self-surrender to the Supreme. When illumination deepens and enlightenment spreads, divine grace descends on the individual. This Ananda which Annamacharya experienced surpasses all others, for it stems directly from the innermost depths of the soul. In a way Annamacharya's compositions can be described as divine works, springing from the divine, and serving the divine. The kind of Ananda in Kankarya of Annamacharya which was endless has to be regarded as the innate significance of Soul-God relationship. The ecstasy, which we find in Annamacharya's songs, is the realisation that the human soul is bound to the over-soul of the Lord of the Seven Hills, indivisible and irrevocable. Annamacharya stands for the sublime significance of Kankarya.

Without such a divine grace, it would be impossible to sing nearly 32,000 hymns. Steadfast devotion was supreme in the scale of values of Annamacharya. It has an intrinsic excellence of its own highlighting the superiority of the spirit over matter and mind. This has been the thought and faith from time immemorial. The Avatars of saints like Annamacharya and Sri Thyagaraja is to bring before the people the primacy of the spirit. The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam has been rendering yeoman service in popularising the eternal Bhakti fragrance of Annamacharya's songs through cassettes and publication of the texts and by celebrating the Saint's day appropriately. Musicians include his songs in their concerts, a reward for the TTD's steadfast effort in popularising Annamacharya's life and musical contribution.

KALAIMAMANI KASTURI

"A doyen of Culture, a pioneer who has served the art field as a gentleman" - said Dr.V.Subramanian, President of Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha, who chaired the function organised by the Cultural Organisations of Mumbai under the auspices of Shanmukhananda on May 10, 1997, to bid farewell to Kalaimamani S.R. Kasturi, who has decided to settle down in Chennai.

The atmosphere at the Convention Hall was emotion-charged as Shri N.Parameswaran (Hon.Secretary, Board of Trustees, Shanmukhananda) observed. For one thing, for nearly six decades now, Shri Kasturi had made Mumbai his home, actively participating in its cultural growth. He has been one of the founder fathers of Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha, a dynamic force behind the Federation of Cultural Organisations in Mumbai and the "harbinger of Tamil Stage in Bombay since 1942", as Shri S.Seshadri, one of the close associates and Hon.Secretary, Shanmukhananda, rightly put it. The Matunga Dramatic Society is his baby.

At the threshold of 80, Shri Kasturi is still active as a dramatist. His enthusiasm and endurance on stage is something to be seen to be believed. A well-trained musician he has moved the audience playing the lead role in "Saint Tyagaraja" and "Purandara Dasa". The latest staging of "Purandara Dasa" early this summer was full of verve and virtuosity.

As one of the torch-bearers, as Shri S.Seshadri pointed out, Shri Kasturi worked ceaselessly for the growth of Shanmukhananda and left his indelible mark

of dedicated service. Besides, he has been closely associated with Natya Sangh and Theatre Centre.

The formality of a farewell was apparent. But in reality it looked wishing him a "home-coming", sooner or later. While majority of speakers talked about Mumbai becoming poorer and Chennai getting richer, Shri U. Sitaram of Fine Arts Society, Chembur, pleaded to him to act as link between Mumbai and Chennai and bring about a "closeness" between the two great Cultural Centres. "His indomitable energy and perseverance in art at this age is something youngsters should emulate", he observed.

Of the six Kalaimamanis awarded to Mumbai celebrities five belonged to the Dance Art, and only one given to theatre artiste, that is Shri Kasturi observed Chemburan, a freelance journalist. None who has gone to Chennai languished, Shri Kasturi is sure to tower over others, he remarked.

Shri Upadhyaya, the Sanskrit scholar representing Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan stole the thunder with a scholarly speech. Drawing parallels from literature and Puranas, he said "to speak about Shri Kasturi is like showing Surya at daytime". Quoting Kalidasa's Natya as a Yagna which makes one a whole being, he said Shri Kasturi has done this Yagna. For a person donning the detective (Shri Kasturi's debut was a detective in "Thuppariyum Sambu"), to enact Saint Tyagaraja and Purandara Dasa spontaneously with ease is not possible unless he loses himself in the role, in the character, he dons. That is exactly the achievement of Shri Kasturi - the Brahmananda Sahodara - he enunciated.

Like others he too hoped that Shri Kasturi would build art bridge bringing the art of Chennai to Mumbai and take the harmony of culture in Mumbai to Chennai.

In his emotion choked reply, Shri Kasturi said he was not severing his link with Mumbai, certainly not with the Sabha he had grown with. In a nostalgic mood, he recalled his experiences, his involvement, the opportunities he had moving with great stalwarts of art, the advice and blessings of the theatre-great Shri Kanniah Naidu, etc.

It was not an easy decision, he confessed, to move away from the city of my growth. However the lone life after the demise of his wife and persuasion of relatives in Chennai made him make this move.

Amidst the cosy domestic environs of Chennai, there seems to be some green pastures for his theatre activity, if Director K. Balachander's request a few years back is any indication.

We pray Almighty that wherever he is the Kalaimamani would keep aloft his art instinct and serve the "Kala" with involvement and reverence.

(At the time of going to the Press the Kalaimamani had celebrated his Sathabhishekam.)

-SULOCHANA RAJENDRAN

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Kathak Workshop

POETRY IN ACTION

To most South Indians, Kathak has always been a very frivolous dance as compared to our regional forms like Bharata Natyam, Mohini Attam, Kathakali and even Kuchipudi, to some extent. The Kathak workshop by the inimitable maestro, eminent Pandit Birju Maharaj, at the Nehru Centre, held May end, and co-organised by Banyan Tree Events was, therefore, an eye-opener.

One has always associated Kathak with fast-paced, vibrant footwork. A mere enunciation of the Bols recited by the dancer. A display of rehearsed creativity, made interesting through an appearance of spontaneity, by the dancer, who freely guides the Tabalchi on stage. Innumerable chakkars the derigueur of any Kathak recital. But the likes of the genius and artistry of a Birju Maharaj is needed to sustain the growth of an art-form by adding a whole new dimension, winning new votaries for his performances and thus Kathak.

The performance on the concluding day by his senior-most disciple was a revelation, a new face of Kathak. Delivery was the underlying note. The young woman was her innate self throughout with all the simple and native charm with a striking feminine grace. Gone were the storming sessions of incessant rigorous footwork, the razzmatazz of make-believe creative flourishes and the high of reaching the 'sam'. For on the Tabla was none other

than her Guru and Maestro 'Birju Maharajji' himself accompanying so tenderly the path being tread by the dancer. In his own words the Tabalchi becomes a Nayaka gently chasing the 'Ghungroo' or Nayika. There is accosting, the escaping of the Nayika, the running away hurriedly before the final 'Milan' at the 'Sam'

The workshop not only revealed what an adept and soulful Tabalchi he was but also the depth of his multi-faceted person in painting, Thumri singing, theatre, films, criticism. Each of these subjects was tackled every evening drawing performers and artistes from the related fields. Thus the percussion session was chaired by Ustad Allah Rakha, the Thumri session by Pandit Dinkar Kaikini, painting by Prabhakar Kotte, criticism and other dance forms by Sarayu Doshi and the theatre session by Alyque Padamsee. While the morning sessions were poetry in action with the Kathak students, the evening sessions saw the real Kathakaar, (the story teller who marks the origin of Kathak). Whatever Pt. Birju Maharaj spoke had the poetic element in it. His similes were powerful and often humorous

Humour is what Pt. Birju Maharaj uses efficiently to reach out to his audience. A whole rhythmic configuration was based on the dialling of a number code on the phone with Tihais as the phone ring from the other end and the final 'Hello' on the Sam. So while the feet executed the dialled number

and the ring, the gesture and facial expressions were of a modern harassed caller and the final exultation at 'Sam' on having got the line. Just so an 'Amad' got composed while washing his face at Calcutta from where he came here directly. The cadences of the splashing water took shape as the Bols.

"The Amad is an untouched piece as I brought it straight here without crossing Delhi. Now it is the students here who have to give this young maiden a beautiful shape and adorn it."

The Bols are a living entity for him. For the stress, the cadence, its relation to the other Bols, as words in a poetry give it a certain form, a shape and an individuality. Thus for Pt. Birju Maharajji, the dance of a Tukda, Toda, Paran or Amad is a dialogue with the Bols which are given birth through his Ghungroos. His inner self transcends and the duality becomes one as it were.

Dr. Kanak Rele who attended the session for other dance styles questioned Pt. Birju Maharajji on the process of teaching Abhinaya. Speaking generally, Maharajji thus replied:

"Earlier I used to teach the sense of movement through the technique of the jerks of arms, shoulders, the hands. Now I strike their imagination. I take *Prakriti* to be my Guni. So when a student just could not get the correct sweep of the arms I took him to the garden and showed him a coiling creeper. The student then repeated the movement just as I had wanted. If still the student does not reproduce then, I simply hand him over to the Higher One and ask Him to do something."

A keen painter himself Maharajji finds so many 'Tasveers' in Nature's creation.

"There are so many colours and probably so many more of which we are not aware."

As a singer, himself hailing from the home-ground of a traditional Gharana where music and dance was part of daily living, Maharajji credits the Thumri for the fillip given to Kathak for its Bhava variation and the introduction of the Bhakti element. The Kathakaar of bygone days sang the songs or verses from the epics and those based on the Puranas.

Talking to theatre-persons and those from the media and television world Pandit commented how he used the idea of profile to great advantage.

"I thus take care of every viewer watching me even from the far corner or sides. The hair-do is so beautifully decked. But rarely comes to view. I evolved movements to throw attention on the hair-do. Similarly like a camera-close-up the hands are gently brushed over the ears in a manner of showing off the jewellery. These are some of the ways the medium of film has influenced my work."

What the workshop thus revealed was the rich creative process at work. The open mind ready to absorb, add-on, preserving, enriching, treading new paths, seeking life and Nature as an eternal Guru. An eternal play of seeking and creating.

Continuous applause followed the presentation of the students' programme on the concluding day. In all humility Pt. Birju Maharaj acknowledged the response and simply said, "Thank you, I have sent it to my Gurus and ancestors. I am now void, Shunya, empty. Ready to start yet all over again." The vicious circle of life transcended, sublimated and elevated as it were.

- NANDINI KRISHNA

Report from Bangalore

Talavaadyotsav

Three Special events marked the 5 -day, 16th Talavaadyotsav, organised by the Percussive Arts Centre, Bangalore this May - end. They were 150th Aradhana of Saint Tyagaraja, Mudicondan Venkatarama Iyer's Birth Centenary and "50 years of Independence and UNESCO - Growth of Musical Art."

The Arts Centre during the 'Utsav' honoured the Kanjira Vidwan V. Nagarajan with Palani Subramania Pillai Award, Vainika D. Balakrishna with Puttachar Memorial Award (instituted by H. P. Ramachar) and Vidwan A. V. Anand with Putturao Memorial Palghat Mani Award.

The programmes from 27th - 30th May, 97 were co-organised by the 90 year old Bangalore Gayana Samaja and held in the auditorium of the Samaja. The concluding session of confirmment of Palghat Mani Iyer Award and the concert-finale took place on 31st May, as usual in the Chowdiah Memorial Hall.

The three special events mentioned at the opening were organised in morning sessions and elicited great academic and practical interests.

150th Aradhana of Saint Tyagaraja : Scholars and musicians like Dr. Lokanadha Sarma, M.A. Narasimhachar, Prof. S. R. Janakiraman, Dr. T.N. Padma, Dr. Sachidevi participated on 28th May. Sangeetha Kalanidhi R. K. Srikantan whose endowment programme it was delivered an introductory speech.

Dr. Lokhanadha Sarma rendered several compositions of Tyagaraja in the time - honoured old Paatantharas of Nayana Pillai School learnt from his Guru Chittoor Subramanya Pillai. *Naadaloludai* (Kalyana Vasantham), '*Mokshamu*' (Saramathi), *Kantajoodumi* (Lathangi), *Seethamma* (Lalitha) and others. He referred to the Aarabhi Pancharathna where the Charanas are rendered culminating not in the original '*Saadhinchane*, but in '*Samayaniki*'.

M.A. Narasimhachar presented a short paper on the Traditions of Tyagaraja. He referred to several rare Ragas like Bhinnashadja, Nadavarangini, etc.

Dr. T. N. Padma, in her presentation on the spurious compositions of Tyagaraja and some Eka Kriti Ragas illustrated extracts of compositions to illustrate the Paatantharas. She demonstrated *Elara* (Kambhodhi) *Vedalanu Kodanda*, (Todi) *Saraseeruha Nayane* (Amruthavarshini), *Vedapureesha* (Poorvikalyan).

Dr. Sachi Devi stated the necessity of a scientific analysis and research on the correct Varnamettu. She with her sister, T. Sharada, rendered *Vaasudevayani* with Vilamba (2 Kalai) Kalyani, *Vandanamu* (Sahana) and *Naaradamuni* (Pantuvrali) in Misra Chapu.

Prof. S. R. Janakiram in his formal Lecture - Demonstration narrated the Guru-Shishya Parampara tradition which proved effective in its impact on the propagation of the Kritis of Tyagaraja. He spoke about the 3 main Shishya Parampara viz., Umayalpuram, Walajapet and Thillaisthanam. The salient features of the different schools were explained and extracts presented. *Emineramu* (Shankarabharana) *Varashikhi Vaahana* (Supradeepa), *Parithaapamu* (Manohari), *Vaachanagocharame* - (Kaikavashi) *Jnanamosagaraada* (Shadvidhavargini) of Walajapet School, *Ethavunara* (Kalyani), *Rama Nee Vaadukundu* (Kalyani), *Ksheenamai* (Mukhari), *Manasa Shri* (Maara Ranjini) of Umayalpuram School, *Naadathanumanisham* - (Chittaranjini) of Thillaisthanam School were presented.

He observed that Nayana Pillai was the chief propagator of the Walajapet Paatanthara and Dr. Srinivasa Raghavan transmitted to my school of Thillaisthanam and Walajapet Schools. He also pointed out that - Kritis of Umayalpuram School

were found to have more Sangathis. Certain Kriti sung differently in different schools like *Vidulaku* - (Mayamalava-goula), *Neeve Ra* (Begada) were explained. *Chethulaara* now rendered in Bhairavi was in Kharaharapriya, as referred to in A.M.C Mudaliar's *Oriental Music* in European Notation.

The evening concert, V. K. Raman's Flute was accompanied by H.K. Narasimhamurthy on Violin, Sadgurucharan on Mrudangam, B. K. Chandramouli on Khanjira and Guruprasanna on Morching. This concert was followed by a vocal recital by Vidushi R. Vedavalli accompanied by Smt. Nalina Mohan on Violin, V. Krishna on Mrudangam and M. A. Krishnamurthy on Ghatam. This concert was exclusively dedicated to the compositions of Tyagaraja in the original Ragas which have been changed over years.

Birth Centenary of Mudikondan Venkatarama Iyer (May 29th) : R. Vedavalli commenced the programme with a homage to Mudikondan Venkatarama Iyer by rendering Tana in traditional way. Sadgurucharan of Vijayawada presented the unique Panchamukhi and Shanmukhi Talavadhanas. Bangalore K. Venkataram in his introduction, traced the history of this form to the legendary. Adi Bhatla Narayana Dasu in 1914, who formulated this. This was later presented by Muthnuri Suryanarayana Shastri of Vijayanagaram.

The Eeshwara Panchamukhi contains the FIVE Gathis of rhythm - left Arm Thrishra; Right hand - Chatrushra; Arms together - Khanda; Left leg - Misra; and right leg Sankeema. Sadgurucharan presently in All India Radio, Vijayawada, presented using the Shankarabharana, Roopaka Tala Kriti "*Shrutha Paala*" of Tyagaraja. Vishnu Panchamukhi presenting all the Five gathis in different order was presented next, for the select Charanas of Bhairavi Swarajathi of Shyama Shastri. (Left leg - Aarohana; Right leg - Avarohana; Right Hand - Adhirohana; Left hand Pratyadhirohana and Arms together Chitrarohana). The Aanjaneya Shatkaala Shanmukhi was rendered for the Pallavi portion of Navaragamalika Varna in Chatrushra and Thrishra. Left leg - I Speed; Right leg II speed, Left

hand - III speed; Right hand IV speed; Left arm - 5th speed; and Right arm 6th speed. The Shatkala for this was provided with the increasing pulses of Sashabda of Adi, in 1,2,4,8,16, 32 pulses in the 8 Kriyas. Six Mrudangists, V. Krishna, B. S. Purushotham, H. S. Sudheendra, N. Amruth Omkar and Subba Rao were the members of the Jury to observe the different Talas used by Sadgurucharn for this event. This was followed by the presentation of a variety of Pallavis. R. A. Ramamani presented a Pallavi in one of the Ashtothara Shatha Talas, Hamsini Nagendra presented a Pallavi in Yathi Thala Mrudanga yathi of 14 counts of a bar. Padma Gurudatt rendered a Pallavi in Avadhana using Sankeerna Nadai, Thisra Thripata on one hand and Mishra Nadai in Khanda Thriuta on the other. Pallavi rendered by M. S. Sheela was in Charukesi, Mela Taala. The concluding Pallavis of the session were by the noted veteran T. R. Subramanyam including an Anuloma-Viloma Pallavi and a Marga Pallavi in Sankeerna Nadai.

H. Kamalnath, President of Gayana Samaja welcomed the gathering. The award function was followed by a highly delectable voral recital by Sanjay Subramaniam, ably accompanied on violin by S. V. Narayan, on Mrudangam by Arjun Kumar and on Khanjira by B. S. Purushotham.

The concluding morning academic session on 30th May "50th Year of Independence and UNESCO - Growth of Musical Art" was presided by Dr. M. R. Gautham, former Head of Department, Benaras Hindu University and Vice Chancellor of Indira Devi Fine Arts University, Khairagarh. The session commenced with a presentation of extracts of a communication of Dr. John Kingston, Former Director, UNESCO, and report of the world commission on World Culture and Development. The fresh concepts introduced in new compositions were highlighted; a reference was made to the unique Thillanas composed by Dr. M. Balmuralikrishna and Lalgudi G. Jayaraman. A Gathi-bheda Thillana of Balamurali was rendered competently by Nagavalli Nagaraj. "Music in films represent the core of classical musical content" was explained by Shataavadhani R. Ganesh. Selected

songs in different languages were rendered exquisitely by Nagavalli Nagaraj supported melodiously by H. Geetha. A paper on "The Changing Complexion of Promoters, Performers and Audiences in Karnatak Music" was presented by K. S. Nagarajan, who also suggested a proposal to be taken up by the Arts Centre regarding the codification of Talas, etc. S. Shankar presented select patriotic songs of Mayuram Vishwanata Shastri and explained the details of the same. B.R.C. Iyengar, Art Critic, presented a paper on the "Improvements in Art Music over Half Century". Shivu, supported by Bali and assisted by Sathyamurthy and Arun presented a variety of percussion instruments including the latest electronic gadgets like Rhythm Box and presented a variety of tone, timbre and tempo of these instruments.

The evening recital was by Dr. R. N. Sreelatha, accompanied on violin by B. Raghuram, Mrudangam by M.P. Ramachar and Ghatam by K. N. Krishnamurthy. This recital was followed by concert by Prof. T. R. Subramanyam supported on violin by Vid. S. Sheshagiri Rao and Laya Lahari percussion Ensemble of Ayyanar College of Music, Bangalore.

The award giving function had its own aura. Phased through three sessions, on the opening day (27th May), on 29th and on the concluding day (31st May), the functions were chaired by illustrious celebrities.

Prof. G. Padmanabhan, Director, Indian Institute of Science inaugurated the Talavadyotsav and presented the Palani Subramania Pillai Award to Kanjira Vidwan V. Nagarajan (son of Violin maestro Papa Venkataramaiah). A Souvenir released on the occasion by the renowned art critic B. V. K. Sastry contained extracts of Mudikondan Venkatarama Iyer's Presidential Address at the Music Academy when he was conferred the "Sangita Kalanidhi".

Felicitating Nagarajan, the Executive Director of the Percussive Arts Centre recalled Nagarajan's association with the flute maestro Mali in Bangalore in early fifties. He observed that it was Palani Subramanya Pillai who pleaded for inclusion of Khanjira in the concerts at the Music Academy. It was appropriate that Nagarajan received Palani Subramanya Pillai Memorial Award, as Nagarajan was the first Khanjira artist to be featured in the major Academy concerts and the first artist to have been Top graded in this instrument.

On 29th evening, H. Puttachar Memorial Award, (donated by Vid. H. P. Ramachar) was presented to D. Balakrishna. The Award was presented by Dr. Raja Ramanna, Director, National Institute of Advanced Studies, who also released a reference compendium H. C. K. Bhatta Memorial Volume -1 - "*Essay on Thaala and Laya*" authored by Dr. N. Ramanathan, Head of Department of Music, Madras University. Dr. Raja Ramanna observed that publication of such technical data on the aspects of Tala and Laya by the Art centre are unique contribution in the field of Karnatak music. Dr. Raja Ramanna reminisced his association with H. C. K. Bhatta in whose memory the volume was released.

K. Putturao Memorial Palghat Mani Award (donated by K. K. Murthy, noted patron and President of Music Academy, Bangalore) was presented to Shri A. V. Anand by Dr. V. Doreswamy Iyengar. The invocation for the occasion was a unique Laya Vinyasa directed by Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma. Following the speech and felicitations was the concert finale featuring Madurai T. N. Seshagopalan (Vocal), accompanied by Varadarajan (Violin) and A. V. Anand (Mrudangam).

Bangalore K. Venkatram





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MUSIC THERAPY

Hopes for Premature Children and Cancer Patients

Whether Bach or the Blues, Mozart or minimalist jazz, music has the power to influence the body and the soul. The sound of music can alter heart and respiration rates as well as brain waves and general well-being. Which is why physicians have been using the power of music in the battle against diseases ever since the 4th century B.C. Today, doctors are even integrating the calming effects of certain compositions in their treatment of premature babies and cancer patients.

Fred Schwartz, for example, an intensive care doctor at Piedmont Hospital, Atlanta, Georgia, is specialised in ante-natal and post-natal care. Inside the womb, the noise levels of around 80 to 95 decibels are about as loud as a disco on a Saturday night. Dr. Schwartz told a press seminar held by the Hamburg polymedia company

This almost deafening racket is created by the blood-flow in the placenta as well as by the mother's breathing and heartbeat. The loss of this background noise at birth must be a particularly traumatic adjustment for a baby, Dr. Schwartz explained. Which is why he has developed a kind of womb music.

Using highly sensitive microphones, Dr. Schwartz recorded the noises in his wife's womb whilst she was pregnant with their child and mixed them in a studio with gentle music and women's voices. The highly encouraging effect of this composition on the 70 test patients were asked to choose their favourite music from a selection of 350 CDs spanning the whole spectrum of musical tastes. They were questioned in detail both before and after their musical chemotherapy.

Most of the patients chose classical music. "Mozart was the most popular composer, followed by classical CDs with a selection of relaxing compositions," said American doctor and music therapist Susan Weber, one of the initiators of the study.

his own child - the baby loved the noises and went to sleep straight away - prompted Dr. Schwartz to test his transition music in a clinical trial.

He played this tummy music at a volume of 80 decibels to 17 premature babies of roughly 1,700 grammes each for ten-minute periods at regular intervals. Despite the noise the result was an obvious reduction in the typical stress symptoms displayed by premature babies. The babies were calmer and slept longer. Their oxygen intake improved significantly and their blood pressure and heart rates sank.

Separate studies had also shown that premature babies developed more rapidly under the influence of transition music. In fighting stress, the babies were using up valuable calories which they urgently needed for their development. Dr. Schwartz explained. The neonates who had been exposed to the transition music spent an average of three days less in intensive care than otherwise. American studies had shown.

Music has a calming influence on adults as well as children, however. In Munich's Grosshadern Hospital, a number of scientists have investigated whether listening to music during chemotherapy can reduce cancer patients' fears and nervous tension. They also analysed which kinds of music patients preferred during treatment.

By contrast, new age music specially produced for relaxation or meditation purposes was not very popular. Only two of the patients asked for this kind of music.

"The music definitely had a relaxing effect," said Dr. Weber. All of the patients reported feeling distracted, relaxed or inclined to dream. Some of the patients even said it made them feel stronger and more determined to conquer the disease.



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A Tribute

"Silenced Sanjukta"

Chambeya Gaurardha Shareerakayai...

The fusion of the energy and elegance, the virile and the grace, the amalgam of Tandava and Lasya - and the concept of Shiva and Shakti - comes to life as Adi Shankara's Ardhanareeswara Sloka unfolds itself through the languages of melody and mime.

You are not able to distinguish where the elements merging into one concept begin and where they end. So spontaneous is the melody and mime that the Tandava-Lasya perceptibly carries home the message the Kailash couple symbolised.

In the stream of Odissi, the Panigrahi couple have become almost synonymous with this concept of Shiva-Shakti that in the dance of spouse Sanjuktha Panigrahi one saw the vital melodic creativity of Raghunatha Panigrahi flowering into its expressional elegance. His specialisation in *Geet Govind* has been a God-send boon to her. They were a rare couple of talents with high spiritual values, great pathfinders dedicated to the Fine Arts and they were made for each other in more ways than one. What Raghunath evoked Sanjuktha expressed.

Their 'Yugma Dwanda', a unique Sawal - Jawab variation perhaps reflected their art life and fascinated everyone. The Pallavis in Arabhi, Saveri, Saraswathi lent an integrated flavour of Karnatak Ragas in Hindustani mould on a fragile visual.

They were even honoured jointly by the

Sangeet Natak Akademy, though she was the recipient of Padma Shree.

Perhaps, Providence ordained the threesome amalgam of Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra, Chela Sanjuktha and musician Raghunath to bring about a renaissance of Odissi, a dance of fragile grace and lyrical quality. Though the vital support came from the wings the grace at centrestage accorded the artform a fine visual perception, propagation and popularity. The trio have given an impetus to the artform and have found a place for it in the international art scene

But the cruel hands of death snatched away the versatile Sanjuktha when she was at her peak at the age of fifty-five, this June. Sanjuktha was perfection personified for 'Anga-suddha, the technique and evocation of Bhava. Her postures in 'freeze' made her a human sculpture and when she danced you saw before you a sculpture come alive. Rhythm was in her system and Bhava, almost a second nature. So easily she could emote. This discipline and clear perspective of the arts she acquired perhaps from her stint of training at Kalakshetra. A disciplinarian father from an orthodox family finding the daughter's aptitude and talent for dance sent her to Kalakshetra at Madras, as he found "no proper training possibilities at his hometown, Bhubhaneshwar". "The stay in Kalakshetra has disciplined my mind and body and brought realisation of what practice is and devotion is", she once said in an informal chat with the writer. The disciplining in Bharata Natyam gave her what she required

for the Odissi which she started learning under Kelu Babu at the age of five and continued in vacation during her study in Kalakshetra.

After Sanjuktha rose to eminence Odissi attracted many and quite a number of dancers came to prominence under Kelu Babu's training. But few could surpass Sanjuktha. She remained the uncrowned queen of Odissi for she could not compromise with tradition or technique.

New themes were not anathema nor innovations. But until they were absorbed in the technique and the form of evocation she did not feel at ease. "Anything and everything cannot form a theme. It has to merge with one's life style, culture and religious bearing", she observed once. An incident she recalled would testify to her conviction and perspective of the art and the artiste that she was.

At a Dance Seminar in Denmark Sanjuktha was questioned by a stage actress why woman should always be portrayed in all meek, docile and graceful

rounded way occupying very little space while male was more vigorous and open having the liberty to be "expansive"!

Sanjuktha was able to convince her that "it is in the very nature of woman, especially Indian woman, to be graceful and restrained and that is what is depicted as Lasya. Her (woman's) sole essence lies in being soft soothing and graceful. It is not in our culture to outgrow this save when became the Kali, to destroy evil".

The Panigrahi couple had brought to fore ancient Odissi poetry and songs, Surdas Padavalis, Tagore's verses in Odissi format composing fine musical structure and a refined visual enunciation.

Few could match her Guru-Bakthi. She never exceeded the parameters of her Guru. Next to Guru it was tradition she worshipped and with a husband who inspired her with celestial melody Sanjuktha entranced her audience. She would ever shine in the memory of art-lovers.

- SULOCHANA RAJENDRAN

MUSIC DEFINED

"Music stands alone cut off from all other arts; does not express a particular or definite joy, sorrow, anguish, horror, delight or mood of peace, but joy, sorrow, horror, delight peace of mind *themselves in abstract*".

- **Shoepenhauer.**

"What most people relish is hardly music; it is rather a drowsy reverie relieved by nervous thrills. Musical education is necessary for music judgment."

- **Santayana**

Courtesy - "Yet Another Garland"

Cultural Scene in Mumbai

FILLIP TO RTP

The Pandal fare for summer heralding the Tamil Iswara Year had two veterans, Madurai T. N. Seshagopalan and M. Chandrasekharan, who have carved a niche for themselves in their respective fields, Vocal and Violin. Rasikas thronged their cutcheries with great expectations.

Despite the scorching sun many had thronged the Pandal that April Saturday as the Vocal concert was to be preceded by a pleasant prize distribution and scholarship award giving function. Not only had the function been delayed owing to the late arrival of the artists, but the concert also turned out to be listless at places. This despite the fact that Seshagopalan's voice was quite under his command, fluent and with flourish. And he was very happy distributing the prizes and advised the youngsters with succinct tips. Perhaps physical fatigue (we learnt that he had been giving concerts consecutively, about ten in twelve days), was the reason why the music did not touch the heart.

There was his splendid vocalism, the traversing of the whole gamut of octaves and emotions in ease, frills and swirling Brikkas, evocative modulations et al. Yet one missed that fulfilment, that rapport.

He opened with *Vandanamu* (Sahana), a Kriti of Saint Tyagaraja from his opera *Prahalada Bhakti Vijayam*. Poorvi Kalyani on an expansive canvas covered a vast gamut of the Raga in his inimitable style, but a few noisy nuances eroded the picturesque Alapana. *Gnanamosagarada*, another of Tyagaraja's selective Kriti with Niraval in *Paramathmudu jeevathmudu* was sung with evocation. The swaraprastharas, however, were used for stunt swara combination and odd permutations. This at the very opening phase of the concert was counterproductive.

A brief Bhajana opener *Ramabhadra Rara* of Bhadrachala Ramadas after, Seshagopalan

plunged into Devagandhari with swirling Brikkas which brought to fore nuances intruding into the Raga niceties. For a neat rendition of *Seethavara Sangeetha Gnanamu*, this was a distractive prelude.

The quicky *Bantureethi* (Hamsandam) had swift sallies, sizzling yet exquisitely sparkling, highlighting the artiste's musical acumen and vision. Todi in an open throated elaborate delineation got off the Ghathra form, though picturised with great involvement. There was much artistry in it but the evocation again failed to touch the heart.

Seshagopalan is a fine artiste where it comes to the RTP sector. He is full of imagination and creative impulse weaving the Pallavi in complex Tala with odd take-off and garlanding Ragamalika swaras with a penchant for Gati Bheda. The evening's Pallavi in *Khanda Tripata Atita Eduppu, Vikasitamukham Shubhaphalapradam Hariharasutam Sadabhajeem* with tempo variations and pace - shifts was a child's play to him. To the basic Raga of Mohanakalyani he wove a garland of Ragamalika Swaras in Bhahudari, Chandrakauns and Revathi, the last in the Veda chant highlighting Udatta - Swaritha - Anudatta note - combine.

M. A. Sundaresan (Violin) of the Parur tradition tried to tread his father Anantharaman's style and keep pace with Seshagopalan's artistry. The percussion pair, Gurusvayur Dorai (Mridangam) and Suresh (Ghatam) stole the thunder as the audience were glued to their seats throughout their Thani.

Sunday's father - daughter, M. Chandrasekharan - Bharati's Violin Duet was the season's best instrumental cutcheri. There was wholesome musical involvement, both the artistes enjoying their play and not compromising at any level. Repertoire was familiar. Yet presentation

refreshing. The very opening *Viriboni*, the all time great, *Bhairavi Ata Tala varnam*, was imposing and the tone and trend of the cutcheri treading traditional track with 'trendy' aesthetics.

Example: Following Dikshitar's *Sri Maha Ganapathi* (Gowla), Anayya's *Bhajanseyave Oh Manasa* (Kedaram) and Tyagaraja's *Janaki Ramana* (Suddha Seemanatini), the trendy Alapana of Kadankutoohalam, played with harmonic English note patterns, added spice to the fare

Soon the duo took to serious Simhendra Madhyamam, where Bharati showed her performing mettle with a seasoned musician's vision. Melodiously toeing her father's style with all the vocal inflexions she showed her prowess as an artist in her own right. In the bass and the upper forays she evoked poignancy with fine play. Vasudevachar's *Ninne Nammithinaiyya* poised them for an imaginative Niraval of the stance *Pannagendra Shayana Pannagari Vahana*. And Violin play was interspread with excellent vocal exposition. Focusing the Swaraprasthara on the phrase g r s n R in the upper octave, the father suavely played a Laya game from varying take-off points. The crescendo reaching finale was impressive though Bharati tended to be 'loud'.

The Thani by the same pair had 'Thani' flavour, for they gave the intricate Laya weave a tonal touch of Simhendra Madhyamam.

It was a brief, crisp RTP the Chandrasekharans played for the day, in Mohanam in Khanda Triputa. The take-off point, the intricate weave with ease and the Ragamaliika Swaras in Varali, Ananda Bhairavi, Basant and Shivananjani made it a memorable number.

A concert worth going miles to listen to.

Agni Nakstra did not deter Rasikas from attending the May concerts as two of the top youngsters, Sowmya and Sanjay Subramaniam were featured. Both have been ascending fast on the performing ladder and the audience did have great expectations.

While Sanjay has come through Talent Promotion Programme, Sowmya has had a slot straight-away at the Sabha Hall as early as 1987, and as a promising chela of that intellectual performer - Guru Dr. S. Ramanathan, she had made an impress. Purity of Patanthara and pitch, voice stability and a rare performing majesty, mellifluity and restraint marked her sure ascent. Ascent she did and today she is considered to be one of the topnotchers of tomorrow.

However, going by the concert at the Pandal one kept one's fingers crossed. This in spite of her overall excellence and flourish of imagination and rendition. Her sense of Sangeetha and Sahitya, the feel for the aesthetics and articulation were immaculate. Her voice range and elasticity have considerably improved. Her repertoire is vast to select from. But one could perceive styles of many stalwarts in her music as also systems, especially the Hindustani. And where restraint brought on to her music a grandeur, the freewheeling she now employs of Brikkas and speed, gives way to spectacularism. One could not help questioning if she were playing to the gallery.

Despite the listlessness felt by the audience there were moments of sheer joy and aesthetic pleasure they went through in her concert when she pictured, for instance, Dhanyasi focusing on the Jeeva swaras and building an edifice of fine musical texture. *Balakrishnan Padamalar* was a finely modulated rendering. One enjoyed also *Sri Venkatagireesam* (Suruti), especially for the swift swaras to Madhyamakala Sahitya. The Raga's image was exquisitely painted. One perceived Hanuman's exhilaration in her *Kanden Kanden Seethayai* (Vasanta). Violinist Kannan also was inspired into the *joie de vivre* and the jet paced swaras pepped up the momentum.

There was a profusion of Kritis and for the manner of their rendering with involvement one was all appreciation for her prowess and artistry. But out of the two major Ragas selected for the evening's fare only Shanmukhapriya was

given an elaborate treatment as a prelude to RTP. The other, Kalyani, had its show straight-away in the Kriti *Ammaravamma* rendered in fast pace and the phase of Niraval entered nearly 75 minutes after the concert took off.

Sowmya put her heart and soul, imagination and intellect into Shanmukhapriya Alapana, Tanam and Pallavi (Khanda Triputa - Ateeta Eduppu) making it a connoisseur's delight. Her swaras at various take-off points, and in different tempo gave the Sahitya structure *Priye, Gitapriye, Sangeetha priye, Sada Shanmukha* - an imaginative exposition. But why did she play into Hindustani nuances, leave alone the Ragas, and forcibly tried to bring them on to Karnatak fold. If she meant to show off her facile ease in the other system too at this juncture, it did not click. The impact of RTP was disturbed, to say the least.

Her accompanists made a fine team rising up to her expectations and enunciation.

From Talent Promotion Programme to Pandal cutchery Sanjay Subramaniam has made great strides. Time was, when Sanjay was first heard in Bombay, Rasikas, including the writer, who were swayed by his music scintillating, swirling and substantive, were apprehensive whether such a music of meteoric genre would last long. Sanjay has proved that his is no flash in the pan. Given the proper grind and practice, voice-culture and discipline with dedication it is not difficult to reach the sky and stay there.

Since the first concert six years ago in TPP, Sanjay has come a long way maturing as an artiste of fine aesthetics, artistry and musicianship.

His style has all the swirls and frills and Brikkas but well-tempered with pauses, Bhava and breath-control. He has perceived his musical strength in the judicious use of all these, and putting his frills and soul he pours out music of excellence. Sahana, Todi, Kambhoji, the all time great Ragas figured in the cutcheri in their touching form, be it in alapana facet or Kriti rendition or Niraval, Swara appendages. There was

imagination, spontaneity of interpretation and felicity of swara-spinning. And capping them all was his conviction in traditional format. *Tillai Ambalathanai* (Sahana), *Kaddanuvariki* (Todi) were two examples of art and spirituality fusing in a presentational format. Display of skill had a fair play and devotional spirit dominated. Result: music of soul searching experience - *Niddura Niragarinchi Mudduga Tambura Patti* - Tyagaraja's lucid advice to the humans on approach to music sadhana - a sure way to eternal bliss - was well understood and conveyed by Sanjay in his Niraval. His hard work has paid him rich dividends.

The Thani by Ramesh (Mridangam) and Sriram Subbaraman (Kanjira) in strokes and strides lent a vibrant rhythmic facade to the Saint's edifice. Venkatesh (Morsing) was a bit uneasy before the intricate sequences Ramesh wove. And elder Violinist Tirupparkadal Veeraraghavan banked on his standardised style to picture a Raga or weave a swaraprasthara.

The grand RTP in Kambhoji in Triputa (Nalu Kalai) with Trikalam, Tisram, Anulomam, Pratilomam, etc., was presented not merely as an intellectual exercise but as a fine art piece where imagination, artistry and aesthetics finely fused. The Alapana take off, for instance, in Tara Sthayi forays inspired him to establish the spirit of the Raga, and spruce up on the Bhava plane. In the second tier of Madhyama Sthayi Sancharas he infused them with poignance and the Bhava was maintained throughout as he glided down to the bass in the third tier to take off to Tanam. An imaginatively conceived portrayal of a Raga, as a vital introduction to a weighty Pallavi - "*Ananda Natanam Adinar*".

One has to accept that today's performing youngsters show a keen perception in Pallavi education and not content with their scientific consumption, they go onto practically enunciate their mastery. Here mastery was mingled with melodious Manodharma giving the edifice credence of an extempore presentation.

Sanjay's exposition with intricate Laya play and Ragamalika Swaras spinning all - Karnataka modes - Kanada, Varali, Begada, Kedaram and Salakbhairavi - had its own impact. His Virutham and other Tukkadas were all in the traditional Ragas.

Come June, the monsoon heralds fresh showers of melody from talents scouted new or 'stars' spotted and a few professionals waiting at the wings for a berth. This year's selections too focused on Parampara, either a scion of the family of musicians or from a musical "Gurukulam". But in quite many cases the youngsters had not confined their talent show on to a single medium but spread their wings to other streams as well, such as light music and film playback.

Hailing from the Violin Parampara of the renowned "L" Brothers, Nandini and Lalitha, who opened the TPP series in June last have a family tradition to bank on. And as the grand daughters and disciples of the 'Patriarch' of the tradition. Shri V. Lakshminarayana Iyer, the sisters were born to fiddle their way right from the cradle. The quality of the Parampara was distinct in their play, they have the natural instinct for the instrumental feel, and they have specialised in dueting. There was so much of complementing each other even in solo Alapanas that the delineations had a continuity, an image with harmonic beauty and melodic aesthetics. They are forging as performing artistes though having their own different academic pursuits.

The brief Raga sketch of Hamsadhvani as a prelude to Papanasam Sivan's *Karunai Seyvai*, the three-octaval sweep of Malayamarutham for *Manasa etulor* with Niraval Swaras in Charanam, the measured delineation of Kharaharapriya, with all frills over the octaves and the spiralling note patterns for the majestic *Chakkani Raja Margamu* displayed the sisters' performing enthusiasm and skill. Their swara dialogue with their bowing technique adapted to Hindustani style and Western harmonies had its own attraction. In all their pref

erence for middle-pace and fast sallies, the sisters did not lose sight of Vilamba (slow) gait where it was required. Instance was *Akhilandeswari* (Dwijavanthi) which was played in its Sathvik pace and enhancing the bhava of the Raga and Kriti.

One weakness the sisters were given to was with regard to the tone of Kaisiki Nishada. In whichever Raga this note occurred it had the microtonal nuance peculiar to Raga Suruti. In Malayamarutham, Dwijavanthi, and at times in Karaharapriya.

G. K. Chandramouli (Mridangam) and G. Ravichandran (Ghatam) paired as accompanists, showed good rapport with the duo.

Next was a soft music full of caressing graceful melody. Which filled the Convention Hall of the Sabha. Modulating his sweet voice to great advantage Krishnakumar of Trivandrum gave a recital which highlighted the delicate grace in Ragas. The placidity of Sahana in that delicate garb was something to be listened to to be believed. Swathi Tirunal's *Jaya Jaya Raghurama* further enhanced the sweetness of the Sahitya when swaras too were coated with honeyed melody.

Melodising Ravichandrika was a bit melodramatic if the fast-paced *Niravatisukhadha* a bit too odd. Dikshitar's *Santhanamanjari Sankari*, in Santhana Manjari in Dikshitar's *lexicon*, (Sucharitra in the Melakarta Scheme) was a rare piece presented. The highlight of the mode, and grandeur of the Raga both were brought to fore in modulated and open-throated variations. Tyagaraja's *Mohana Rama* rose to great heights in Ucharan, Niraval, Swaraprastharas etc.

The Tukkadas too were of high order. The accompanists Babu Narayan (Violin) and R. Vaidyanathan (Mridangam) were equally talented and played quite inspiringly. Babunaryan's Sahana and Mohanam were fine extensions of the vocalist's picturisation. It was certainly the evening of the young team.

How long would this sweet toned talent remain within classical ambience? What if it is lured into film melodies? Already Krishnakumar has lent his voice to playback singing in films and is also in the light music circuit. One keeps one's fingers crossed.

June had show-cased two more talents, one from Charumathi Ramachandran's tutelage and the other, from her mentor MLV's respectively. Both Meenakshi Seshadri and Pushpa Sriram have high-pitched voice but the latter has greater felicity and mellifluity.

Meenakshi has acquired the skills of the school, but has yet to harness to the concert requirements. In her fast-paced delineations she slips the Sruthi if not Raga nuances. Pantuvarali, Madyamavati Alapanas had grey spots which could have been avoided.

As any of her genre she took up a challenging Pallavi, a wordy one and rendered with certain innovative twists. Cast in Ata Tala Tisra Nadai, Alita Eduppu, it could be called a "Ganesha Pallavi" stringing the opening stance of a number of Kritis. on the elephant God and tuned to Hamsadhvani. "*Vinayaka Vallabha Nayaka Gajanayuta Gananayaka Siddhi*". The moderate Vinyasa, Trikalam had a mechanised precision. And the Swaraprastharas in Ragamalika were sung to the Ragas of the 'Kritis' and wound off at different mid-points of the Tala, where the kriti opening occurred. Begada, Chakravakam, Rudrapriya and Shanmukhapriya were garlanded and wound off at *Vallabha Nayaka, Gajanayuta Gananayaka and Siddhi* respectively. A well-knit exercise done with precision. But the finale stringing the Ragamalika swaras in reverse order and singing the Pallavi in Ragamalika was a bit colourless for want of tone-blend. Instead of stringing the opening strain of each Kriti as it is in a Ragamalika she could have herself tuned the lyrics into a beautiful Ragamalika Pallavi using the same Ragas, giving expression to her originality.

Her accompanists Sherthalai Sivakumar (Violin) and Hanumanthapuram Bhoovarahan

were amateurs too and played with certain caution.

Pushpa Sriram who has had much exposure in concert circuit, and wide training under P. S. Narayanaswamy and Sulochana Pattabhiraman besides MLV showed her mettle in the pitch and the pace (mostly fast and Brikka-oriented). She has flexibility and fluency of voice and with the vast reach at her command she scans the octaves, at times tempered with Gamakas and others flourished with Brikkas. She knows the value of pauses (Karvai) but prefers, perhaps for concert effects, a flowing style.

Lathangi in the opening phase was full of frescoed artistry. Sivan's *Venkataramana*, Niraval at *Alarmelmangai* followed by Swaraprastharas had a suave spontaneity. Dasaranama *Indudayabarate* (Kalyanavasantham) executed a poignance quite suited to her voice texture.

Kharaharapriya, an elaborate essay glided through many melody lanes with frescoed fervour, in the higher forays voice fatigue was perceptible but she managed to tide over and held her fort with confidence. Violinist Melakaveri Tyagarajan tempered the image with gamakaladen phrasings. *Prakkala Nilaabadi* however towered in rendition as Niraval of *Manasuna Dalachi Maimarachiyunnanu* was improvised with the feel of Sahitya and that evoked Raga Bhava.

Hamsanadam was a jewel in the crown of Alapana for RTP fully glittering with "Brikkaed Frescoes" and sustaining pauses. Khanda Triputa Tala seems to have been the rage with artists of the season, professional as well as talents on promotion. Pushpa chose the same in the RTP suite "*Shanmukhanai Muruganai Pani Maname Ganapathi Sahodaranai*".

Tukkadas too glittered in her style. Here is an artiste whose music has splendour, and sparkle. Whether she would sustain its classical quality or be carried away by its glitter and gloss, time alone will prove.

-Kinnari

MUSICOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Acoustics, Psychology, Physics, Medical therapeutics, even Botany or Zoology, may without objection be taken up for study by the musicologist if he starts his investigations with a legitimate problem of music, otherwise such investigations are most likely to benefit these sciences and not music itself. For instance, any study of the effects of music on plants is a problem of botany and not of music. The results of such study in their practical application will benefit agriculture, horticulture or floriculture, but it passes one's imagination how they can possibly be of benefit to music. I should not, therefore, think much of the musicologist who ignores problems of music proper and strays into investigations in the aforesaid sciences without relating his investigations to the principles, philosophy or technique of music itself, hoping innocently that musicology will by some fluke benefit from such investigations. It is common knowledge that as yet not a single instance has come to light of anything of musical value having resulted from such researches. It is open to the musicologist to utilise the results of researches in other sciences for the purpose of understanding, explaining or illustrating the principles, philosophy or technique of his own branch of knowledge, but not *vice versa*. He need not concern himself with problems which initially or ultimately belong to other sciences. Otherwise his own work as a musicologist falls out of gear or even becomes out of character. Other sciences have not so far supplied, and most probably can never supply, the fundamentals of musical technique, theory or philosophy though they may serve to illumine or illustrate them and thus play a subsidiary or supplemental role.

Research in the principles, philosophy and technique of music in terms of the traditional *sangita sastra* affords scope sufficient for life-long fruitful investigation for dozens of the best brains of Indian musicologists and for scores of others who may wish to relate the principles or discoveries of other sciences to this *sastra*. As yet, however, not even the fringe of optimum research native to this *sastra* itself has been touched for lack of properly qualified researchers. Nevertheless there can be no objection in principle to the specialists of other sciences attempting an interpretation of their tenets in terms of musical theory, philosophy or technique, if they are conversant with these branches of music knowledge. For his part, the Indian musicologist *per se* would be thankful if he is left free for the present to carry on his legitimate work of unravelling the mysteries of traditional musical theory, philosophy and technique without intrusion of obstruction from the votaries or other fields of research.

What I have said above goes to confirm the view that both Intrinsically and relatively to the state of knowledge of the traditional *sastra* among present-day musicians, an over-riding urgency and priority vest in research in this *sastra* and that, although there is no bar in principle to other studies or research in Indian Music being taken up, their conclusions will have to be justified in terms of the scope and philosophy of this *sastra* because it has regulated the practice and technique of Indian music for centuries and as yet no science has been evolved to replace it.

- P. L. S.

Courtesy "Indian Music Journal".

